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J E S S Y.



A TALE.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

1887

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JESSY;

OR, THE

ROSE OF DONALD'S COTTAGE.

A Tale.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE BRAVO OF BOHEMIA, &c.

'Tis Nature's most inviolable law,
To make each species propagate its kind:
The generous offspring from the generous stock
Derive the virtues, and confess the sire.

HIGGON.

VOL. IV.

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Printed at the Minerva Press for

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JESSY.

CHAPTER I.

LADY Madeline, reconciled to the death of her son, more by the degrading light in which his past actions must have placed him in the eyes of the world, had he survived, than by the resignation our duty as Christians demands from us, was soon enabled to join her family. The very few instances of commonplace affection which she had ever been accustomed to receive from lord Malcolm could hardly justify her lamenting him as a father; but towards her newly-recovered brother,

VOL. IV. B ther,

ther, whose misfortunes had endeared him to her, and his lovely daughter, whom she had so long loved, she now turned with enthusiastic affection, and to them she looked for that degree of happiness which hitherto no period of her life had ensured her.

Jessy, devoted to the father, whose every earthly comfort centered in her, could scarcely realize the change in her destiny ; while their mutual friend, the excellent Mrs. Duncannon, equally interested in the happiness of each, and partaking with heartfelt delight in the general joy which soon pervaded the family, would have readily met their wishes by lengthening her visit, had not Henry's anxious letters, and Donald's impatience to reach the bourn side, rendered her equally solicitous to do so ; and when, to Jessy's entreaties that she would defer her journey but for a short time, she replied, " Can you allow nothing for Henry's impatience ? " the crimson tint
that

that overspread her lovely features plainly told her interest in the cause.

The blush did not pass unnoticed by her anxious father, who, for the first time, appeared to recollect that he was not wholly unacquainted with Mrs. Duncannon having a *protégée*, who was also the companion of his daughter's early years; but Henry was not the name by which he was accustomed to hear his character extolled by the good Donald. The views he had already in contemplation for Jessy now made him more than ever solicitous to satisfy himself how far she was interested in the fate of her former friend; and having, in the most handsome manner, apologized to Mrs. Duncannon for his apparent neglect of any person connected with her family, expressed his earnest wishes that her young friend could be prevailed upon to join their domestic circle.

It was now become necessary to acquaint his lordship with the important

change which had also taken place in Henry's destiny; and she felt a degree of pleasure, not wholly divested of pride, that she was enabled to prove his present situation was so little inferior to that of Jessy, for she had marked a more than common interest during her recital, both in the countenance of lord Malcolm and Mr. Ainsley, whose son, an officer in the army, she was given to understand, was daily expected, with the friend whose bad state of health had alone prevented him from accompanying them on the voyage. The former she was particularly anxious to see, for at this moment it occurred to her the many obligations his lordship continually acknowledged himself under to Mr. Ainsley, and the very great attachment subsisting between them, might have induced lord Malcolm to bestow his blooming Jessy on the son of his friend, or at least to wish that such a union might be probable; and though, from the apparent goodness of
of

of his heart, his visible affection for his daughter, and, above all, the remembrance of his own unhappiness, she was willing to believe he would, in the end, leave Jessy a free agent in her choice.

She was herself too much interested for Henry to be quite easy on that point; but her own anxiety to convey comfort to the good Margretta, by returning her husband to her, and the eager desire of Donald again to embrace his aged partner, and convince her that he was still faithful, determined her to leave the fate of her younger friend to time, and at once to fix upon the period for setting out. But to this neither lord Malcolm nor lady Madeline would accede, until they had obtained a promise of her returning to them when she had arranged every thing to her satisfaction at the bourn side; and which having agreed to, she determined not to name this too-probable rival, when recounting to Henry the events which had succeeded each other

at Tantallan Castle. She had already accounted to him for her protracted absence, by partially touching upon the circumstances which had combined to detain her; the particulars were reserved for their meeting, which she now anticipated with much pleasure, although the regret which her friends expressed at the prospect of parting with her could not fail to reach her affectionate heart; and the day preceding that on which she was to quit them would have been tinged with visible melancholy, had not lord Malcolm, with that urbanity of manners so natural to him, endeavoured to exert himself in amusing each of their party.

Drawn round their social fire, towards the close of the day, he said, with an assumed gaiety, for his heart throbbed at the task he was about to impose upon himself, but which he nevertheless believed a compliment done to his benevolent visitor, whose valuable society his own elegant mind knew so well how to appreciate—

appreciate—"I have been led to believe that curiosity was a leading trait in the female character, but really I am half inclined to contradict the assertion; for though, Madeline," addressing his sister, "both you and Jessy have, by your affectionate solicitude, flattered me into a kind of consequence to which I have been long estranged, both appear so perfectly satisfied with having found a brother and father, that by what means, it should seem, matters not."

"Indeed," her ladyship replied, "you do me an injustice: I am very desirous of knowing all that has passed during our long separation; for even now the late transactions appear such a strange dream, that until I learn many particulars from yourself, I shall not be quite satisfied of their reality; but I was fearful you were not sufficiently strong to undertake the task, for you must have much to tell us."

"And I," said Jessy, raising her expressive

pressive eyes to his face, "dared not make a request that would too probably awaken memory to a painful sense of the past, deeply as I am interested in the trials of my dear father's past years."

"Sweet pleader!" he returned, while the parental tear glistened in his eyes, "supported by your presence, I shall acquire strength to repeat my wayward tale, which I would do in the presence of your amiable benefactress. Tell me, my dear madam," he said, addressing Mrs. Duncannon, "do you coincide in my opinion, that all our actions are more or less governed by interested motives? In making you more acquainted with my past destiny, I mean to rob you of that sympathy at all times so desirable to the human heart. There have been periods in my life, when Heaven knows how much I needed it, and there was a moment when its kindly influence alone saved my despairing soul from sinking beneath its too severe task."

Wishing

Wishing to divert his increasing agitation, Mrs. Duncannon mildly replied—
“To convince your lordship how perfectly I subscribe to your opinion, I must be allowed to assure you, that I am deeply interested in the recital you have so obligingly promised us, if it can be undertaken without trespassing too much upon your present state of health, which, remember, is still too delicate for much exertion.”

Acknowledging his sense of her goodness, he said, that as he had now so much to live for, it was most probable he should husband his remaining portion of strength with a miser's care, grateful that after so many shocks, his constitution, weakened as it was, might yet promise him a short pilgrimage with beings so dear to him; “for never, my Jessy,” he continued, “could your father for one moment suppose, until within these few months, that the loved resemblance of your sainted mother was spared to sooth

my last hours; but though bereft, as I believed myself, of every tie which could bind me to existence, my perturbed soul refused to lay down its weary burthen of life—refused to quit its frail tenement, laden with a father's curse. Lord Malcolm's forgiveness was no less essential to my eternal, than it had been to my temporal peace.

“ You have heard, my dear Mrs. Duncannon, that by my unhappy marriage I converted the hitherto best of fathers to an implacable enemy, whose revenge hurled me to destruction. Alas! he knew not that to be for ever exiled from his paternal affection, denied his beloved presence, was of itself a punishment that needed no augmentation — needed not the scorpion stings of an accusing conscience, that incessantly reminded me I had doubly aggressed—had embittered the last days of a parent once devoted to me, and consigned to added misery the most perfect
of

of human creatures, whose every smile reproached my own accusing heart ; for too well I knew hers was breaking as she daily saw the fallacy of my hopes that returning affection in the soul of lord Malcolm would induce him to recall his banished child, and restore me to the affluence I had ever enjoyed, and for which, for her sake only, vainly I sighed.

“ But I was destined to carry the deep sense of my disobedience far from the happy shores of my native land. To the invaluable friendship of my more than friend, the generous Ainsley, I was indebted for the means of courting fortune in the character of a military man. The regiment in which he procured me a commission was then stationed in the West-Indies, for which I embarked, with my adored Adela and her lovely boy, of whom it might indeed be said justly, he was ‘ the child of sorrow, and baptized in tears.’

“ The commencement of our voyage

was favourable, and pronounced a pleasant one by those who were more accustomed to the element, which I had never before tried, and which then appeared to me, under the existing circumstances, horrible; for only the situation of my suffering wife could have enabled me to struggle against the dreadful lassitude which overpowered my strength. Involuntarily my eyes were strained towards the point for which we were steering, and as anxiously I watched every breeze, lest a change in it should retard our progress. Judge then my awakened misery, when on approaching the shores of Jamaica, we were overtaken by a storm, which for two days kept our devoted bark the resistless sport of winds and waves. In such a fearful scene, where is the heart, however innocent, which death will not appal? To us it was inevitable; and my prophetic soul, ever alive to my fatal act of disobedience, suggested the retributive hand of justice in the desolating
blast

blast that incessantly howled around us. In the distressing tumult which prevailed, Adela alone preserved a mournful silence; clasping her sweet boy to her maternal breast, she awaited the awful crisis with that fortitude she had evinced under so many previous trials: in silence also, but it was the effect of despair, and not her heavenly resignation, I watched over her, when the awful confirmation that we had sprung a leak reached the cabin. Starting as from a dream, I flew on deck, and perceived every exertion making to save the lives of those on board by means of the boats, that were already alongside, and into which every one was crowding with the most alarming precipitancy. The captain, to whom I addressed my inquiries as to what I should do with my family, coolly replied, ‘ It is now, sir, every one for himself; the sooner you get your lady on deck the better, for there is not a
moment

moment to be lost.' In a state of desperation, I was returning to the cabin, when a sailor, more humane than his unfeeling commander, followed me with friendly offers of assistance, assuring me we had yet time to save the boats if the lady would only exert herself. Tearing my now affrighted boy from his weeping mother, I consigned him to the care of the generous tar, and supporting the almost lifeless form of my Adela in my trembling arms, reached the deck just at the instant they were casting off the boat. Frantically I implored them to take us in, and, dear as is self-preservation, they could not hesitate.

“ The storm had greatly abated, but the surrounding darkness left me unconscious of the number who had already entered the boat, when having placed Adela in it, and followed myself, I turned about to take my darling Henry from his rough protector, for I still distinctly

ly

ly heard his cry of terror at being thus left with a stranger; but imagine my horror— Oh no!" he added, "only his distracted father could know, could feel such agonies as those which tore his already lacerated heart, when he found the boat had actually left the ship, and he was told that a moment's delay would have endangered the safety of all on board; 'and she is even now too full,' said the savage captain, 'to stand any chance of our gaining the land.'

"How deeply, when too late, I repented having embraced his cruel alternative! how anxiously wished we had remained in the sinking vessel, which was become the tomb of my child, while his wretched parents were evidently preserved for a no less melancholy fate! Not a sigh or tear told that his hapless mother had survived his loss— she lay in my arms until morning dawned upon us, and such was the state of my own senses, that I neither felt a wish that she might recover,

ver, nor breathed a prayer for the continuance of a life I had rendered so miserable—so undeservedly wretched; for our then situation surpassed misery. Joy, however, soon lightened every countenance but mine, when on a sailor's proclaiming 'Land!' the captain, who, it appeared, was well acquainted with the coast, declared it must be the island of Jamaica.

“Animated by the exertion now made to reach it, and the assurance I heard from all on board that a few hours, with such a breeze, would enable them to do so in safety, my eager eyes once more gazed upon the increasing speck, and something like hope whispered, if once landed, my now only treasure might be recovered—But she was still happily insensible to all around her. A prospect of their own safety had left the crew leisure to think of the rest who had quitted the ship in the second boat, and which some averred had put off before themselves;

themselves; but this was contradicted by others, who thought it was very probable the sailor that had charge of my hapless boy might have got a passage with them—‘For he would hardly,’ said one of the men, ‘stand like a fool on the deck when his life was in danger; and if he got into a boat, it mattered not to him which.’

“My throbbing heart caught at the slender hope that the good fellow, sensible that no time was to be lost, had made for the other boat, while I was too much engaged to miss him; but of that boat no appearance could be traced. Had she ever reached Jamaica, I might have recovered my child; but whether left in the fatal vessel, which must have sunk in a few minutes after we quitted her, or that he really embarked in the no less devoted boat, to me he was lost for ever. His wretched parents landed on the island of Jamaica, heart-broken, friendless, and destitute.

“With

“With the succeeding scene, you, my dear madam,” said his lordship, addressing Mrs. Duncannon, “are already acquainted; for the good Donald was a no less faithful narrator of all that passed than he has been to the trust reposed in him. I shall therefore pass over the months which succeeded his departure from Jamaica, marked only by a torpid state of existence, which rendered me alike insensible to the extent of my sorrows, and wholly incapable of attending my duty as a soldier; but worthy Fitz-Owen, Donald’s good captain, and his still more excellent wife, had not limited their humanity to the first stage of my unprecedented misfortunes; their zeal in my cause remained unabated, and the unwearied attention with which she had provided every comfort for my expiring Adela, and soothed her last hours by the arrangement made by her goodness for my infant Jessy, was extended to the miserable survivor. If my heart,
grown

grown callous to every feeling, was for a moment sensible of one sensation, it was her commiserating goodness that awakened it; and when, at the end of many months, I slowly recovered from that oppression on the brain which had chained every faculty, I found myself no less a debtor in gratitude for their kindness, than I had been a pecuniary one. Only two letters had been forwarded for me to the island, and these might have given them some information respecting myself or family, but their honour was held too sacred; and still trusting time would yet mitigate my sorrow, they kept my letters inviolate, until their anxious friendship was rewarded by seeing me enabled to peruse them myself. They were from my friend Ainsley, who on hearing the ship was lost on her passage, had impatiently waited for intelligence of my family; but having in vain anticipated letters, and learning at the War-Office I had joined my regiment, wrote
to

to me, and this was followed by a second, in neither of which any mention was made of my child or her nurse. I was alarmed; but there was still an apathy, a degree of stupor, about my feelings, which rendered me less sensible of the nature of this new calamity, which the good Fitz-Owen too plainly perceived was impending over my devoted head; but they kindly suppressed their own fears for the safety of my little Jessy, rightly judging it would too soon become more palpable to myself.

“ When capable of guiding a pen, I wrote to him, and, as he has since told me, in an incoherent style related the manner in which I had sent her to his protecting care. After dispatching this letter, my mind was wrapped in a false security that his answer would satisfy all my doubts, by announcing her safe arrival in England; but while I awaited in this listless state the return of an English mail, my regiment was ordered
to

to another island ; and my disinterested friends, believing the change of scene would be salutary to me, heard the order with pleasure, though deeply regretting the necessity of our separation.

CHAPTER II.

“ ACCUSTOMED to their friendly society, my widowed heart had attached itself to them as its last resource ; hence the parting with them awakened every pang before felt—every wound bled afresh, and agonized memory, roused to a painful conviction of the past, prompted the first real inquiry as to what had become of my infant Jessy. The lapse of time forcibly occurred, and with it a confirmation, that, had all been right, she

she must have long since reached the only asylum my wayward fate had left me power to secure for her, and for some days my grief was unceasing; but hope still bade me look forward—Alas! how often had I vainly done so! The Fitz-Owens had promised to forward my now anxiously-expected letters; but the first intelligence we received at our new place of destination was the loss of the packet—intelligence succeeded by months of torturing suspense, during which I dragged on a sort of non-existence, to which death would have been preferable, and augmented only by the fatal conviction which at last reached me, that of all my wretched family, I alone was the isolated survivor. The measure of a father's curse was now complete—misery could inflict no more, nor mortality long sustain that which had crushed me—at least so I fondly believed, at that dreadful crisis, and I welcomed the approach of death with rapture; but, like
hope,

hope; it evaded my grasp, when I imagined the friendly grave already opening to receive its willing tenant. My stubborn heart had not a tie to earth; yet, as if conscious that even the silent grave promised no refuge for the disobedient, it hovered on the verge of eternity, and from the bed of sickness I was again raised—a living monument of mental misery. When the next testimony of unabated friendship reached me, in the well-known hand of Ainsley, I was sufficiently recovered to return him an immediate answer, and describe the state to which sorrow and sickness had reduced me.

“ Alarmed for my situation, his active benevolence instantly determined on removing me, as soon as possible, from the West-Indies, and as quickly procured an exchange into a regiment then serving in England, and his communication on the subject was shortly after followed by orders for my return.

There

There was at this period a ship in the harbour bound for England, and under sailing orders, on board of which happily I might have reached its shores in safety—but I had not drank my bitter cup to the dregs.

“Gratitude would not suffer me to leave the West-Indies without again seeing the generous Fitz-Owens, to whom I owed so much; it was easy to procure a passage from Jamaica to England, and as, in consequence of my bad health, I was allowed a certain leave of absence from my new regiment, I determined on paying them a short visit, and embarked, fatally embarked, on board a merchantman bound direct to the island. The crew chiefly consisted of Irish and Portuguese: we had been only two days at sea, when visible dissatisfaction appeared on board. The captain, a man of violent and irritable disposition, had, as was represented, on a slight provocation struck a seaman; the
man

man resenting the blow, was impertinent, and orders were immediately issued for his being punished with severity, against which the mate, whose particular friend he was, remonstrated with some warmth. This, it should seem, was productive of much altercation, which ended in the punishment being inflicted, and the mate closely confined. The half-suppressed murmurs now gradually increased against the captain's tyranny, as it was termed, who had far less friends on board than the delinquents; and the result was a confirmed mutiny, which terminated in the command being wrested from him, and, it is most probable, his murder also, for I never saw him from the first intelligence I obtained of the confusion which was reigning on the deck.

“ The instant the mate was liberated, he came to my cot, in which I was confined by sea-sickness, and with assurances of every respect being paid to me,

both by the crew and himself, begged me to be under no apprehension for my personal safety, adding, that when they made a port, I should be conveyed on shore immediately. He then attempted to extenuate the conduct which, he said, they had reluctantly been obliged to adopt, or become the abject slaves of a tyrannical brute, to whom blood was familiar.—‘ But are you not afraid,’ I remarked, ‘ to risk the power he will not fail to exert hereafter, to punish you for so great an act of violence, for, while he lives, he certainly has the power to do so, and you will surely respect his life?’—‘ That,’ the mate replied, ‘ depended on his own conduct;’ adding, ‘ he is now our prisoner;’ and I fancied a conscious expression in his features, that told his fate was already determined.

“On my inquiring if they meant to alter the ship’s course, I was answered in the affirmative, and that it was then done; but that he would again promise me every
attention

attention should be paid to my accommodation, not only during my stay on board, but that they would endeavour so to arrange matters, that I should suffer as little inconvenience as possible from their not going direct to Jamaica, which he said was now impossible, as the owners of the vessel resided in that port, and their lives were by the laws forfeited for what they had already done; it was therefore their present intention to proceed to the Mediterranean, which design the weather then favoured.

“ All remonstrance on my part was, I well knew, unavailing ; I therefore endeavoured to content myself as much as possible, under the unpleasant circumstances I was so unexpectedly placed in ; and for three succeeding days all appeared tranquil on board.

“ Towards the verge of the third, I heard them pace the deck with more than common velocity, and though they spoke little, I could perceive some

change had taken place. In a few minutes the new captain, the *ci-devant* mate, entered my cabin, and with much emotion advised me, if equal to the exertion, to come on the deck, as it was requisite for them to make the most of their number on board, at least in appearance, as a strange sail had hove in sight—‘ Which I am sorry to say,’ he added, ‘ although I do not wish to alarm you unnecessarily, savours too much of an Algerine corsair for us to remain quite inactive. We are well prepared with fire-arms,’ he continued, as he unlocked the arm-chest, ‘ and if it comes to the worst, must die in our own defence, for from them we can expect no mercy.’

“ I had recovered from the effects of my voyage sufficiently to leave my bed, and was reading when he entered my cabin. I listened with horror surpassing that his hardy nature was capable of feeling, even for self-preservation; for my enervated arm could effect nothing
for

for my defence, could scarcely draw my sword, and the prospect of perpetual slavery on that dreaded shore shook every fibre of my disconsolate heart.

“ With some difficulty he assisted me on the deck, as he said, to increase the number already assembled on the ship’s quarter ; but consternation sat on every brow, as they asserted she would too assuredly prove what they expected ; and, whether from guilt, or mere personal fear, a general panic prevailed, as she continued to gain upon them, which in a moment yielded to desperation, when, having taken the glass by turns, one and all confirmed the awful truth that she was indeed a corsair, from whom there was no escape but by death. Each seized his weapon, but aware I should rather be in their way than otherwise, I was desired to return to the cabin, and thither I turned my weary steps, without a hope, save that death would shorten the period of a bondage now inevi-

table, for a supposition that our little crew had aught to expect from a force so superior was absurd. But I was not long left to my own reflections—the increased confusion on deck warned me of the enemy's near approach; to this succeeded tumult and disorder—they were alongside—the clashing arms announced the engagement to have begun, and a carnage too horrible to describe ended the sanguinary and unequal conflict; for our crew, as they had said, fought but for freedom, and resigned it only with their lives: not more than five were, with myself, conducted on board the victorious vessel, to which I was insultingly dragged over the slaughtered bodies of those who had so obstinately defended themselves to the last, but in so doing, heaped coals of fire upon the unhappy survivors; for the Algerines, foiled of their captives, treated the hapless remnant with inhumanity; neither did the spoils reward them for the loss they had

had sustained themselves, as our vessel was small, and her cargo not so valuable as they appeared to have expected, from the discontent they manifested during the remainder of the voyage, during which I would have welcomed death under any form; but it was still protracted; and I landed on the coast of Barbary, in the firm conviction that I was assuredly destined to breathe my last wretched sigh, alike unpitied and unknown. So little," said his lordship, "can erring mortals penetrate the inscrutable ways of Providence, and so seldom do they place sufficient trust in that Power which can alone enable them to surmount the trials that fall to their lot.

"I was inured to misery, and passively kept on my sorrowing way, listless of what might follow; but there have in all ages been so many victims to that barbarous nation—so many who have, in the bitterness of their hearts, told each his sad tale, as to leave a repe-

tition of some years of my captivity immaterial; for slavery can differ in little but as the masters of the wretched captive may vie with each other in cruelty or humanity.

“ For once my evil genius slept, and mercy, so little known, and more seldom practised by the Algerines, warmed the breast of him who was destined to be my first master. The commiserating spirit which had induced him to purchase me in the public market-place, (where, with my partners in distress, I was exposed to sale, and the insulting taunts of the surrounding Infidels, who bear our holy religion a mortal hatred), alleviated many of the horrors attending the first state of bondage to my feeble frame. Every nourishment was allowed that might promise to recruit my exhausted state; I heard only the soothing voice of kindness, and, though still a slave, experienced even fatherly attention from the venerable Hadgi Mulladen.

Mulladen. For myself, I had no wish to live, but every sentiment of gratitude obliged me to receive his proffered comforts, and which, co-operating with my youth, brought me imperceptibly back to that world which for many months I endeavoured to persuade myself was receding, though slowly, from my sight.

“ With returning strength I endeavoured to make myself useful to my benefactor, for in that light, rather than as a master, he appeared, when contrasted with the wretches whose daily tortures were inflicted without a feeling of remorse on their helpless slaves, and into whose hands, but for his humanity, I might have fallen : perhaps the difference of my appearance, to the rough sailors who were my companions, inspired him with some idea of a future ransom ; but when, on his once naming the subject, I mournfully told him I had no such expectations (for I had determined never to put the known genero-

sity of my only friend to such a test, by revealing to him my situation), he made no alteration in his conduct towards me——”

“ And this,” said Mr. Ainsley, interrupting his lordship, “ is the only proof of unkindness with which I have to tax you ; it was a false delicacy, which I am not quite satisfied I have even yet pardoned.”

“ Say not so, my excellent Ainsley,” replied lord Malcolm ; “ I had long been a tax upon your disinterested friendship, which I had no longer a prospect of discharging ; and it mattered little where the residue of such an existence as mine was passed ; and thus situated, years had glided over, in which, if I had not learnt to bear my fate with resignation, something like it smoothed the rugged path, and taught me to kiss the rod of affliction, which had bowed me to the earth.

“ Hadgi Mulladen had but two children—a daughter, of whom he was extravagantly

travagantly fond, and a son, whose nature differed widely from his humane father : every slave disliked him, and a general joy prevailed through the whole groupe, whenever he was about to sail ; for, as he commanded one of his father's vessels, he was but seldom at home, more than a short period at a time, during which some complaint was sure to be preferred, which invariably ended in the punishment of the accused slave, and at which he always attended in person, lest it should be mitigated. The overseer, a creature in his own interest, was alone eloquent in the praise of his young master, and I often imagined I was far from being a favourite of either, although both were too much in awe of Hadgi Mulladen to reveal their opinion of his visible partiality to me, which continued unabated until the hour of his death, in which it was his intention to have given me an incontestible proof of his friendship, by restoring me to liber-

ty ; but, fatally for me, the humane design was frustrated by the unpropitious return of Horric, his son, who arrived within a few hours after the indisposition of his father had taken place. In a conference with him, I was particularly recommended to his care, with strict injunction, that if he died I should instantly have my freedom, as a mark of his own good will and approbation of my conduct, during eleven years slavery.

“ Only an old female servant and his daughter, the amiable Cadija, were present during this interview ; but finding himself rapidly growing worse, I was sent for to his apartment. Shocked at the alteration in his appearance, for the hand of death was already on him, and not less affected at the violence of his daughter’s grief, as she was led from his chamber on my entrance, I stood a moment incapable of speaking ; until, roused by his beckoning me towards him,

him, I approached his bed, dropped on my knees beside him, and raised his death-like hand to my lips. With a placid smile he said—‘Alphonso, I would that thou hadst embraced our holy faith before I had been called hence, so well I loved thee; but if that may not be, I would reward thy faithful servitude by offering thee liberty. But, after so long a residence among us, perhaps thou hast no wish to return to thy home, for I have never heard thee speak of family or kindred—say then, what shall I do for thee? as the last mark of my favour, ask what thou wilt, and I promise thee.’

“Agitated by the conflicting emotions of such a moment, I gasped for breath, as the prospect of un hoped-for deliverance dawned upon my so long benighted soul. The name of my family had touched every feeling long dormant in my deserted breast, and painfully told me I had no expecting family to greet
my

my return; but Ainsley might yet live, and remembrance whispered my father, my dear relenting father, might, through his means, be induced to pardon his long-lost son; the thought was ecstasy, and in tremulous accents I implored my freedom.

“ Turning to an attendant, Hadgi Mulladen desired Horric might be summoned; he had left the house, and before he could be found, a visible change had taken place in my expiring friend, who evidently struggled for life to complete his generous purpose.

“ Horric at length entered the room, and approached his father’s bed; anxiously I watched the dying look, the gasping eagerness with which, having taken his hand, he essayed to speak—but it was a vain effort; he cast his pitying looks towards me, then turned them on his son, and at last, as if the agony of his soul to speak his wishes was become too painful for even expiring nature to restrain—

restrain—‘ Give him——’ inarticulately burst from his agitated lips, but the imperfect sound which should have closed the sentence died away unuttered.

“ I had no longer a friend, a benefactor; but in the exulting Horric a hard master, who waited only until the earth had received the respected Hadgi Mulladen, to convince me of the bitter change in my destiny. He pretended not to know the meaning of his father’s words, and resolutely refused to believe it could tend towards liberating a captive for whom no ransom had been offered in eleven years, and as obstinately declared, without the sum he demanded, never to give me freedom : what that sum might be, I never inquired, for my proud soul already revolted against his unjust yoke, and I sullenly performed those offices which habit and kindness had made familiar to me. But new tas’ s, and each infinitely more laborious, were soon assigned me, and which would have been doubly

doubly enforced by the whip, but that he deemed it too early to throw off all appearance of respect to so decided a favourite of Hadgi Mulladen, lest his sister Cadija, pitying my misfortunes, should interfere.

“ From the old female attendant of her father, I learnt what had passed with Horric respecting me ; but the intelligence served only to make him more despicable in my sight for his perfidy and ingratitude, as, had I revealed my knowledge of it, the consequence would have been fatal to my kind informer ; and for many months I bore accumulated insults in mournful silence, though they were bitterly aggravated by being contrasted with the indulgence I had been wont to receive in his family.

“ But even my patient submission to his harsh decrees at length failed to satisfy his tyrannic temper : the more I did, the more was exacted from me, until patience could endure no longer, and
I dared

I dared to complain, nay to resist his orders. This was what he aimed at, that he might have a pretext for getting rid of me. I was summoned before him, and accused of having, by my unjust complaints, endeavoured to make the rest of his slaves revolt.

“ Proudly I denied the charge ; but thrown off my guard by his unmerited taunts, I haughtily demanded why I was ungenerously detained, when, by his father’s commands, I was no longer a slave—‘ It is for me only,’ I added, ‘ to complain of injustice!’—Sarcastically he exclaimed—‘ Refractory slaves I never keep ; but to convince you, Christian, that you are still a slave, know that I shall instantly provide you with another master—perhaps I may be fortunate enough to find for thee another Hadgi Mulladen.’

“ Nor was he long in performing his first threat ; I was indeed transferred, without delay, to another master : but
I will

I will not trespass on your feelings by a recital of scenes witnessed, and tortures endured in his service, or rather, I should have said, in that of his unfeeling overseer, for my master had set out on a journey, with several of his slaves, within a few days after I had become his property, and was absent nearly three months, during which time I had nearly reached the climax of my misery.

“ Fainting beneath the disgraceful stripes I had one day endured, when my exhausted strength rendered the completion of my task impossible, and dreading the return of light, now become hateful to me, I was stretched on my miserable pallet, ruminating on the past, and fearfully shrinking from the future; my heated brain turned from the cruel contrast, and in an instant suggested the only means of escape. I had patiently waited through years of anguish for the alleviating hand of death; once I believed my trials were a just reward for my disobedience

obedience—now I considered them as far surpassing my crime, and in bitterness of soul accused my Maker of injustice—‘Why,’ I exclaimed, in phren-sied accents, ‘when Heaven and earth are leagued against me, why should I longer stem the unequal contest? There is but one refuge from misery like mine, and who shall longer compel me to sustain the hated load of life, when even this enfeebled arm can extricate me from it!’

“I was raising myself from the ground, though with much difficulty, when the exclamation—‘*Savage wretch!*’ reached my ear, in a voice I knew not, and at the same instant the person who had spoken advanced, and kindly taking my hand, assisted me to rise. Without surmising what his intentions were, and vexed at being thus diverted from my now fixed purpose, I listened to his offers of assistance in profound silence: but such was the soothing power of his voice,

voice, so persuasive every accent he uttered, that, wholly subdued by kindness, to which I had of late become estranged, I confessed the deed I meditated, and to which a series of misfortunes I could no longer contend with had driven me.

‘Neither have I been exempt,’ said the generous stranger; ‘misfortunes have pressed hard upon my soul, and years of slavery humbled my spirit with the dust; but I have been enabled hitherto to support my trial, and patiently wait the decrees of Heaven. At this instant, although like yourself a captive, my lot is less hard; for, as my duty is confined entirely to attendance on my master, my task is comparatively easy, for, though a man of haughty manners, my long services have given me a degree of influence over him which at least enables me to alleviate, in many instances, the harsh severity practised upon his slaves in general, partly indeed by his own orders, but still more unpardonably carried
into

into execution by the villain his overseer, who, lost to every feeling of humanity, would, upon all occasions, rather exceed than mitigate those orders. Hence your present sufferings are the result of an absence which I now more than ever regret was protracted beyond what I expected. I had been on business for my master, and returned only just in time to accompany him in his late journey, on which I learnt the circumstance which had given him an English slave, and which he stated to have been in consequence of your occasioning a revolt among those of Horric, your former master, who, to get rid of you, had taken a very trifling sum—"Hassan," he said, "will take special care to prevent his tampering with mine, by keeping him in due subjection." 'This I could too well believe,' continued my friend, 'for I know his aversion to those of our faith, and impatiently counted every day until our return, which

which was but a few hours since, when with real sorrow I heard from your fellow-sufferers what misery he had inflicted, with what savage ferocity governed his hapless victims, during his undisputed reign over them ; but it is now past, therefore take comfort ; I have brought you refreshment, and will promise you very different treatment, for I have the means to counteract his vile abuse of power.’

“ There was comfort in the assurance, and I gratefully thanked my new friend, who did not leave me until perfectly satisfied I no longer meditated the dreadful purpose to which I had been prompted by desperation. A very few days proved the change which had taken place. To the unremitting attentions of my preserver I owed every thing ; but his society, his friendship was a blessing that richly repaid me for the horrors of slavery : to me he devoted every minute not passed in attendance on his master, and

and I daily discovered sentiments, feelings so congenial with my own, that our attachment to each other became too reciprocal, too firmly cemented, to admit of a separation.

“At this moment,” said his lordship, “the blessings to which he alone has restored me would lose their value, had he not been spared to partake them with me, for to him I owe my restoration to liberty, my friends, and country; and with the ever grateful Malcolm he must now share the wealth of which fortune has been so niggard to him. How impatient,” he added, “I am become to introduce this justly beloved circle to his acquaintance! nor can I satisfy myself as to the cause of their detention, unless indeed your considerate Hector, my dear Ainsley, fancies the health of my friend too delicate for the journey, after the many charges I left with him on that head.”

“Or it may be,” said Mr. Ainsley,

“that

“ that military duties have obliged Hector to postpone the journey for a short period, which will be all in favour of your friend, whose strength will still be recruiting ; but after this digression, we will thank your lordship to proceed ; as, notwithstanding I have before heard a partial account of your unpleasant adventures, I am not less interested in this circumstantial one than my female friends.”

Lord Malcolm smiled, and continued —“ Nothing of any moment occurred during the remaining years of my captivity, until the happy era which gave, as I have before said, through the means of my more than friend, my deliverer, freedom to *both*. The increasing partiality of Hamed Halisaad, his master, could not fail to render him hateful in the sight of Hassan the overseer, as it enabled him almost constantly to frustrate his unfeeling purposes ; but it was in vain he complained of the preference
shewn

shewn to the Christian slave—Charles was merely so in name, for he seldom made a petition that was not as instantly granted, or pleaded in vain for any point he wished to carry; and Hassan's resentment was at last extended to his master; but the revenge he meditated was confined in his own breast, until having secured such of the slaves as he could command to his interest, the plot was ready for execution.

“For them it unfortunately happened that one of the chosen number had once been indebted to the humanity of Charles, though time and his hardened nature had long since erased all remembrance of the benefit. Now called upon to conspire against the life of Hamed Hali-saad, on a promise of freedom, he felt no compunction; but when he clearly understood they were, one and all of the conspirators, to prove on oath that the Christian slaves, Charles and Alphonso, had alone perpetrated the deed, and re-

collected the tortures to which, for such a crime, or even on the accusation, they would be condemned, memory recalled the moment when the man he was to accuse of murder, and condemn to death, had saved him from the galling stripes inflicted by his present employer ; and though tacitly agreeing to join the insurgents, he secretly determined on apprising my friend of the plot, without risking his own detection. But, irresolute how to effect it, he still delayed, until roused to a sense of our danger, by hearing that very evening was fixed on for the deed, which was to emancipate the whole party from slavery."

CHAPTER III.
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“CHARLES had been spending the hour with me in which Hamed Halisaad regularly took his evening walk, and was about quitting my miserable cabin, when the slave before mentioned hastily approached him, and in hurried accents exclaimed—‘Fly to the north grove, if you would save Hamed Halisaad!’

“Without waiting to make an inquiry, Charles darted onward, nor stopped until he reached the place so emphatically marked out—but all was still. He had now time to recollect the strange import of his information, and was ruminating on the circumstance, when he observed his master at some distance, walking, as

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was



was his usual custom, with his arms folded, and a majestic step; still there was nothing to imply danger, and he would have returned; but a consciousness of his being incapable of explaining what had brought him there, if questioned by Hamed Halisaad, restrained him, since to leave the grove unperceived by him was now almost impossible; neither without some plea for addressing him could he obtrude on his privacy; it was therefore most prudent to remain as he then was—concealed from his observation, and this he continued to do.

“ When his master advanced within a few paces of the spot, he stopped to examine a young tree; almost at the same moment Hassan, with a hurried step, approached him, and presented a paper, which Hamed Halisaad took from him, and having exchanged a few words with him respecting the tree which had attracted his notice, prepared to unfold the paper, and Hassan, as usual, retired behind



hind him. While he perused it, Charles, who attentively watched his motions, observed the extreme agitation with which he looked around him, in every direction, as he drew from his vest a small poniard, and had but a moment to spring from his retreat, and clasp the hand in which he clenched the murderous weapon, that had perforated the folds of Hamed Halisaad's robe, as he turned in consternation to demand what it all meant?

Charles, with the candour resulting from truth and conscious rectitude, briefly related all that had come within his knowledge, while the guilty soul of Hassan, thus foiled, and shrinking from the investigation he knew must follow, maintained a sullen silence. ' 'Tis well,' said Hamed Halisaad, taking the poniard; ' this will at least bear testimony of thy treachery; from others I may better learn the extent of thy guilty intention.'

"To effect this, pardon and freedom were promised, not only to the slave who



had warned Charles of the base transaction, but to all who, being concerned in the plot, would explain the extent of the conspiracy. They were few in number, and had, as it fully appeared on their examination, been instigated more by fear of Hassan's cruelty than the respect they bore him; and as it was clearly proved, he had himself intended to destroy Hamed Halisaad with the poniard, which had been previously infused in poison—to accuse Charles as the murderer, and myself as an accomplice, no further evidence of his guilt was requisite, and he was executed within a few days after.

“ The slaves were then set at liberty, and my friend summoned to the presence of his master—‘ For the many services thou hast rendered me,’ he said, addressing him with much kindness, ‘ I owe thee my warmest thanks. Had I given thee liberty, I had perhaps done but what I ought; but thou wast of consequence to me, and I continued to hesitate



tate how I should act, until the gift has lost its value, for now indeed am I too much thy debtor, generous Christian, to name the reward due to the preserver of my life! Say then only in what I can best serve thee, and fear neither to tax the friendship, interest, or power of Hamed Halisaad, for, no longer a slave, but his friend, on each and all thou hast a claim.'

"Gratefully expressing his thanks, Charles assured him, that the heartfelt satisfaction of having preserved his life was of itself a sufficient reward, and that he should ever rate it among the very few happy events of a life marked with many sorrows; but that, since honoured with the distinguished promise of his future friendship, to that he would gratefully become indebted for the only favour his unbounded goodness had left him to ask.—'Name it,' said his generous master, 'and though it were to the half of Hamed Halisaad's fortune, 'tis thine:



even *that* is a recompence too small for his life.'

"With diffidence my noble disinterested friend demanded my freedom: scarcely could Hamed Halisaad be persuaded he heard aright, for he deemed the gift too contemptible, and generously desired him to make a second request, and the slave he required should be added to it; but in vain he urged—his noble preserver had no more to ask; and having gained his point, joyfully flew to me with the happy intelligence that I was no longer a captive; and in a short time, laden with unbounded proofs of Hamed Halisaad's munificence, my friend, having taken an affectionate leave of him, embarked, with myself, on board a vessel provided for him, which landed us in safety at Leghorn.

"Every anxious thought now turned towards the happy shores of England; and we were fortunate enough, shortly after our arrival, to have our inquiries for a passage answered by a polite and pressing invitation



tation from the captain of a sloop of war, then in the harbour, to dine with him on board his ship, purposely, as he said, that we might see the accommodation he was anxious to offer us, in the hope that we would accompany him in the voyage—an offer we gladly accepted; and once more embarked upon that ocean which had already been so fatal to me.

“ Wrecked alike in peace and health, I was dragging towards my native shores a shadow only of the being which had left them, uncertain what my reception might be, should I be permitted to reach them, and still unconscious of the event which was to take place during my voyage. Anxiously interested in the recovery of my shattered health, nothing could exceed the unwearied attention of my friend, or indeed the good captain; and by their advice I went regularly on deck every day, for the benefit of the sea breeze, which was mild and salubrious. I had one morning remarked among the

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ship's



ship's crew an elderly seaman, whose countenance, I thought, expressed both sickness and sorrow, and on making the observation to the captain, he replied—  
‘ I wish the poor fellow had never been brought on board—it was on the whole a very foolish business ; but he is an obstinate old man too,’ he continued, ‘ for although I have repeatedly told him he shall be set on shore when we get to England, he has taken it into his head that he shall never live to do so, and that if he does, his wife will be dead of grief long since, which will be still worse : besides which, he has other troubles, which press heavy on him, because he cannot reveal them to any one. However, I trust, with our present prospects, the sight of old England will shortly speak joy to all our hearts ; for, after a four years’ cruize, we have all many expecting friends.’

“ I,” said lord Malcolm, mournfully,  
“ remembered the many more I had been  
absent,



absent, and how few friends there were to greet my arrival, and again looked towards the disconsolate sailor.

“ At that moment, mistaking my own feelings, I believed that it must be something like sympathy, from the similitude of our situations, that made me imagine his features were not altogether unknown to me ; but Charles at that instant coming on the quarter-deck, exclaimed— ‘ Malcolm, I want your opinion,’ and I had scarcely heard the subject on which I was to give it, when one of the midshipmen approached me, and having apologized for his intrusion, asked if I would allow him to inquire if I had ever been in the West-Indies? adding— ‘ It is a question, sir, which may be of some importance to you, and is of the utmost consequence to the old man who has more than once excited your pity.’ ”

“ I eagerly answered in the affirmative, and in turn begged I might instantly speak to the man. Trembling with agitation,



he obeyed my summons, and in faltering accents implored me to tell him if I really was with my regiment in Jamaica, and if I knew captain and Mrs. Fitzowen?

“ Scarcely knowing what I had to expect, in a state not less distressing than his own, having satisfied his first inquiry, I added—‘ And you are—must be, the man to whom my child was entrusted! Why then do I see you here?’

“ The scene which followed,” said his lordship, “ you may readily conceive. For some minutes he was incapable of uttering a word, and continued to clasp my knees with a distracted air, when my friend deemed it advisable we should retire to the cabin, where the explanation so requisite to both could take place more fully.”

“ And what on earth,” said lady Madeline, interrupting his lordship, “ could have taken Donald on board a man of war? for that event is even more strange  
than



than the manner in which he left his family. I have sometimes been induced to think, his great anxiety for Jessy's welfare might have prompted him to go in search of you; but then he would have gone direct to the West-Indies."

" 'Tis more probable," returned lord Malcolm, " that the object of his pursuit was his own child; but as old people like to be their own historians, I shall leave Donald to relate his at another opportunity."

Satisfied in his own mind, that in this transaction, as well as many others equally nefarious, Sinclair had been an active agent, his lordship did not think it requisite to be more explicit on the subject to lady Madeline, as he knew that Donald had already acquainted his friend and benefactress with the detail so necessary to his own justification: from her, Jessy had also learnt the particulars, and without further comments, lord Malcolm continued—" Having satisfied my im-  
patient



patient anxiety as to the health and safety of my recovered child, and pacified the self-accusing Donald with assurances of that forgiveness, which he persisted his conduct left him no room to expect, for that his own child ought not to have been a consideration, after the promise he had made the dying mother of mine, I succeeded in restoring that tranquillity to his mind which he had so fully imparted to mine.

“Hitherto I had merely supported existence; but in the hope that a father’s forgiveness would sooth its last moments by revoking a curse, under which I dared not encounter death, I had now a second inducement to live, not less powerful—to receive from a sister’s hands my long-lost treasure, and to search through the world for the angelic being from whom she had received her, endowed with every qualification of mind that could endear her to a doting father, as from Donald I also learnt that Mrs. Duncannon (in  
whose



whose praise he was ever eloquent) had left the north."

Jessy caught his hand with fond enthusiasm, and clasped it to her enraptured heart, while the tear of sensibility glistened in her eyes.

Mrs. Duncannon, in thus seeing her fondest wishes realized, every anticipated hope gratified, fully entered into the feelings of father and daughter.

Lady Madeline, who tenderly loved both, wept from excess of joy; and the good Ainsley, no less interested in the scene, quitted his seat, and walked to the window, to conceal those feelings which did honour to his nature as a friend and a man.

Fondly kissing off the truant tear from Jessy's cheek, lord Malcolm continued—  
"Such was the effect produced on my health and spirits by this so unexpected discovery, that my amendment surpassed even the belief of my delighted friend; and we reached London, accompanied  
by



by the grateful Donald, whom the captain had consigned to my care, without one unnecessary delay.

“Impatient to find my worthy Ainsley, I hastened to his hospitable mansion, satisfied if the revered owner yet lived, its doors would expand to the fugitive, of whom he had lost sight so many years.

“’Tis needless to say how we met; for over hearts like his absence and misfortune have no other power than that which binds them more firmly to the wanderer and oppressed. Scarcely had I felt the friendly pressure which confirmed my sincere welcome, than my full heart proclaimed the recent discovery it had made of my child’s existence, and residence beneath my father’s roof. ‘Then this mysterious letter is explained,’ he replied, producing one, which he said had reached his house during his absence in the country, where he had been detained for some months on particular business,



business, and that by some mistake it had never been forwarded with his other letters. He had reached London but a few days before my arrival, and had determined to satisfy himself as to the purport of its contents by an early visit to my father, of whom, for some years, he had heard no more than that he was living in the most perfect solitude.

“There now remained no doubt of the young person alluded to being my daughter, and that the writer was not unacquainted with the circumstance, ambiguous as was the information he had given of that as well as other matters.

“Poor Leopold!” said his lordship; “had he lived, he too, among more of my humble friends, would have been entitled to a large portion of my esteem, for his faithful attachment to my poor father.”

“And was Leopold the author of the letter you speak of?” asked lady Madeline, with much surprise.

“He



“He was,” said his lordship; “and his being so has made me more deeply regret his unhappy fate, because I think he was deserving of a better. My arrival but a few months since might have saved him—but reflections are now unavailing.

“Elate with the prospect of meeting my child, and the hope of a reconciliation with my father, I anticipated no intermediate danger, nor was myself sensible of that debility of frame from which the doctors apprehended so much; no sooner, therefore, was my friend, whose sudden and violent indisposition had detained me in town, pronounced out of danger, than he urged my instant departure for the north, when the hand of Providence was again manifest in my miraculous escape from death; nor can I ever sufficiently reward the excellent Glendairn, to whom, under Providence, I owe a life, which I am become as anxious to prolong, as I once was to resign it.



it. He, however, persists in refusing every offer I have yet made him, and solicits only a personal attendance on myself, in which, for the present, I have gratified him. But that cannot long be; the preserver of Malcolm's existence must not become dependent on the caprice which, in some unguarded moment, might induce me to consider him as a domestic only. The soul of Glendairn was not formed for servitude, and a short time, if I mistake not, will enable me to reward his worth in a manner gratifying both to him and myself; for I have already discovered there is a magnet in the castle, whose influence over him is powerful; in short, that Mary, the sprightly attendant of lady Madeline, is a prize which would richly repay the debt I owe him. As soon, therefore," he added, "as your ladyship can dispense with her services by finding a substitute, we must place them in easy competence near us;  
for



for I must not lose sight of him as a valued friend——”

“ We, however,” said Mr. Ainsley, interrupting his lordship, “ appear to have lost all recollection of time, and that Mrs. Duncannon had proposed setting out early in the morning, which, if I mistake not, is already beginning to peep over the mountain.”

On presenting his watch, every one was surprised at the lateness of the hour, so deeply had one and all been interested in the recital, which had occupied their attention too much to leave them an idea of the lapse of time. It was now a pretext for entreating Mrs. Duncannon to delay her journey, but her increasing attachment to lord Malcolm's family made her aware that procrastination would only render her still more reluctant to leave them. She had promised the impatient Donald to accompany him on the following day; and as the most trivial action of her life was founded

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ed on principle, no selfish motive could restrain the fulfilment of a promise once given ; therefore, having again renewed her assurance of shortly paying them a second visit, she took an affectionate leave of the whole group, and once more turned her steps towards the bourn side, where her presence was anticipated with no small anxiety, by the worthy Margretta and honest Gilbert, whose impatience after the arrival of the letter which announced her probable return, and which Henry had communicated to them, had rendered him so restless, that he imperceptibly lengthened his walk every day, on the road by which she must travel, in the hope of meeting her.

From the carriage window his excellent mistress marked the approach of her faithful domestic, while yet at some distance, and in her heart thanked him for this tribute of respect to her : but Donald's



nald's joy at recognizing his old companion became so excessive, as to be equalled only by the surprise with which Gilbert gazed on him, in utter silence, when Mrs. Duncannon, having ordered the postillion to stop, beckoned him towards her. It was her intention to have left Donald a short distance from her own house, till she had apprized Margretta of his arrival; when, therefore, Gilbert had satisfied himself that his dim eyes, as he said, had not indeed deceived him, she proposed their walking homeward together after the carriage, which would allow her time to prepare Margretta for their unexpected visitor; but she had scarcely persuaded her it was indeed possible that she would again see Donald, kind and good as he had ever been, than she beheld his aged arms extended to receive her thrice-welcome embraces; the trembling lips refused utterance to what the full heart would have expressed; and  
tears



tears of unsophisticated affection mingled with his, as her pale cheek rested on his throbbing breast.

For some minutes both Mrs. Duncannon and Gilbert remained silent spectators of the interesting scene; but when Margretta was sufficiently recovered to recollect the many inquiries she had to make, and which would naturally follow, she withdrew, that her presence might be no interruption to the felicity of a re-union, which their advanced period of life, or the many years they had lived together, had nought diminished.

No less impatient than Margretta, to ascertain the probable motive of Donald's mysterious departure from the bourn side, Mrs. Duncannon, while at Tantalán Castle, had learnt from himself particulars which confirmed her belief, as well as that of lord Malcolm, that Sinclair was alone the projector of the deception practised on the unsuspecting old man, who, as we have already stated,



ted, quitted his happy home, supported by the self-approving motive of his journey—that of speaking peace to his sorrowing and penitent child.

Having reached Berwick, he procured a passage to England in a small fishing-vessel, and then journeyed on foot, agreeably to the direction given in the letter, which he carried in his bosom; but the small sum of money he had taken from home was nearly expended; neither had it sufficed to provide him with sufficient nourishment to keep up that portion of strength requisite for so long a journey at his period of life, and that under the pressure of the two-fold anxiety he felt for Edward's unhappy situation, and the distress he well knew Margretta would feel for his strange absence; but he was within a few miles of Portsmouth, the place of his destination, and although the night was far spent, the near prospect of so soon seeing his son rendered him unmindful of that  
bodily



bodily fatigue under which, but for those circumstances, he would have sunk. To an imperfect moon he was indebted for that assistance which his ignorance of the road made necessary, and he was proceeding onward, ruminating on the afflictions into which he was plunged, by the loss of his box, on his landing at Portsmouth so many years back, when his step was impeded by the body of a man, stretched at full length across the footpath: supposing him to be in liquor, he stooped down with an intention of moving him out of the way of passing travellers, but was shocked on perceiving he had been most inhumanly beaten, and though not dead, was incapable of answering his questions.

Still intent on the humane impulse which prompted him to attempt removing him to a more secure situation, he laid down his trusty oak stick, the companion of his weary journey, and was raising the wounded man, when he felt



himself rudely handled by a strong arm, and on looking up, perceived a sailor, who, with an oath, demanded to know if he had picked up a watch?

Donald answered in the negative, and immediately solicited his assistance for the poor man before them, whose situation he was deploring, when a second voice exclaimed—"I have it, Jack—let us be off while we are safe!" and scarcely had they left the spot, to which their inhumanity had rivetted him, than a coach drew up, and the first words which assailed his ear were—"Secure the villain, and it will be easy to trace the other two."

Unconscious of their meaning, Donald began to relate to the first person who alighted the manner in which he had found the wounded man, but was inexpressibly shocked to find his unvarnished tale treated as a vile falsehood, and himself suspected as being at least accessory to the treatment the poor fellow had



had met with, while they as loudly demanded who were his accomplices in the atrocious deed, asserting the outside passengers, as well as the coachman, had plainly seen two men in sailors' clothes, running from that direction, who, if not concerned with him in the visible robbery and murder, would have staid to give him their assistance, as they must decidedly have passed the spot.

Again Donald repeated what had passed between the men and himself; but he had no witness to attest his innocence, and was told he must remain in custody until the man, in the event of his recovery (which was not very probable), might be enabled to explain the affair more clearly.

Ardently he prayed that a few hours might see him sufficiently recovered to do so; and though his honest pride was wounded at even the supposition of his having committed a crime from which



his principles recoiled, his innocence enabled him to bear patiently the insults heaped upon him by those who stood forth the champions of humanity.

Conveyed to Portsmouth, he was left to his own reflections for the rest of the night, in a common prison, and on the following day summoned before the sitting magistrate, to whom he was ordered to give an account of himself, both as to his connexions, and the transaction of the night : and this he did, as briefly as possible, stating the purport of his journey to be in quest of his son, whom he expected, if still living, to find in the naval hospital.

A messenger was instantly dispatched, with orders to ascertain if a person answering the description given was to be found there ; in the meantime he was detained in court, where, to his inexpressible pleasure, he heard the poor man for whom he was accused, though  
not



not yet able to converse, was apparently sensible, and that great hopes were entertained of his recovery.

He had been recognized by several people, and it was proved he had left Portsmouth on the night of the robbery, in company with two other sailors. He had then a watch in his pocket—and it was also known that he had money about him, having spent it freely at the last house he was seen in ; but his pockets were now empty, and his watch gone.

In that part of Donald's story which related to a watch, there was something mysterious, in the opinion of the magistrate, who, however, himself observed, there was nothing in the prisoner's countenance which implied guilt ; for though faint and exhausted by fatigue and want of food, which he had not tasted for many hours, he was still firm and collected ; neither was any money found upon him, save the little remnant of his



own impoverished store, amounting only to a few pence ; but the staff which had supported his feeble steps was produced, stained deeply with blood, which it had collected when he laid it down to raise the wounded stranger. The stick he instantly acknowledged to be his own, for nothing could have induced him to part with it, even though it now threatened to crush, by its dark evidence, the master it had supported through so many years.

But fate had yet in store a greater stab, for which he was less prepared ; the messenger returned with an assurance that no such person as he had been in quest of was to be found at the hospital, nor was there such a name upon the sick list, which had been traced back for some weeks.

Glowing with the resentment which tinged his furrowed cheek, at being accused of falsehood, he was on the eve of proving his own innocence, and confounding



founding his accusers, by producing Edward's letter, which he still carried in his breast, where it had remained concealed when his pockets had been searched, on his being apprehended; but a moment sufficed to check the impulse which prompted him to betray his child's secret, since it followed he would be commanded to explain the contents, against which every feeling of the proud Scot, the fond father, rebelled; and the hand which he had instinctively raised to his bosom dropped listless by his side, as he drew the heartfelt sigh, which was interpreted to a far different cause than that in which it had its source.

Again he was conducted to his prison, where new terrors assailed his already harassed mind; for though convinced himself that Edward must have dated his letter from the hospital, it was too certain he was no longer there, from the state in which he was when the letter was written. It was most probable



death had deprived him of his poor boy—but then it would have been known; he had perhaps fancied himself worse than he really was, had recovered, and might be again at sea; yet even this consoling thought was embittered by the distress into which his rash letter had plunged him, for without money, without a friend, what was to become of him, even though cleared of the foul crime of which he stood charged, but which his innocence made him consider as the least of his present evils.

Care and attention had contributed every thing to the recovery of the poor sailor on whose account he was held in durance vile; but no friendly voice soothed Donald on his bed of straw, or sweetened the dry bread, moistened with his own bitter tears, until the seaman was able to relate how and by whom he had been so treated, and which he solemnly declared was alone by the two sailors, who had accompanied him from  
Portsmouth.



Portsmouth. He had, he said, received a considerable portion of his prize-money, of which they were aware; but that having an aged mother, with whom he wished to share it, and to whom he was going, he had, for its better security, quilted the greater part in the back lining of his jacket, reserving only a few guineas for travelling expences. Of this his companions had freely partaken, before he left the town; but that, on reaching the spot where he had been found, they knocked him down, and with horrid imprecations demanded his money, adding, they knew he had plenty about him. Finding resistance vain, and sick with the unexpected blow, he gave them all that his pockets contained; but this was not their aim, and by no means satisfied them. Knowing they could not discover very easily his little hoard, he had resolutely denied having more than what he had given them, declaring

E 5



claring he had left the rest with a friend in Portsmouth.

Thus disappointed, they seized his watch, and having vowed to take his life also, continued inhumanly beating him, till, no longer able to defend himself against such unequal violence, he had sunk senseless beneath their repeated blows; though convinced that, during the whole transaction, they were unassisted by any other person.

He was then asked if he should know either of the men again? and having answered in the affirmative, as he had been some hours in their company, Donald was conveyed to his room, when the stranger declared he had never seen him before, and that the robbers were very young men, and both of them seamen.

Having been told Donald's account of the affair, he eagerly entreated he might be liberated, thanked him in grateful terms for his kind intentions towards him, and lamented that they  
had



had been turned to his own disadvantage; and finally, with the characteristic spirit of a British sailor, insisted upon his taking a sufficient sum to defray his expences home, and which he said he could well spare, as the rascals had not wit enough to carry off his jacket, in which he found his money as he had placed it.

#### CHAPTER IV.

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THUS acquitted, Donald was again restored to liberty; but, satisfied in his own mind there must still have been some mistake respecting Edward, he proceeded instantly to the naval hospital, where, to his utter dismay, he was assured no such person had been there

within the time he so minutely specified.

It was now that he felt the full force of his disappointment; again he read his letter over, and such was the corresponding circumstances contained in it, that only Edward could have dictated what was written; for who could know aught of Mary's sad story but himself? After a thousand vague conjectures, he concluded that the mistake must originate in the date of the letter—that the writer had perhaps meant to have written 'Plymouth;' and, after a night spent in various resolutions, he fatally determined on travelling thither, since the generous sailor had furnished him with the means of doing so; and to return to Margretta with such an unsatisfactory account of her dying boy was, he thought, impossible.

But the same disappointment awaited his arrival at the second seaport. After many fruitless inquiries, he learnt
the

the ship, on board of which Edward had served, was at this time on the West-India station. More than ever at a loss how to interpret the letter, and still more how to act, he took up his abode at one of the public-houses, in the tap-room of which he was eating his solitary supper, when a party of sailors entered in high spirits, and having called for refreshment, seated themselves near him. In a few minutes the glass and joke went briskly round—he was pressed to partake their fare, but his heart responded not to the voice of mirth, and he modestly refused their offered civility, when one of them having drawn him into conversation, learnt by degrees the nature of his disappointment.

“If that’s all, my hearty,” said a second sailor, who sat on the other side, and had been attentively listening
“cheer up, old boy, and take your grog, for I can tell you more about Ned than you have heard yet; I know him well,
and

and can satisfy you the letter you speak of is all a *hum*: he went out of this very port but a few weeks since, as merry as a grig, and a finer young fellow never stepped from stem to stern—many a rough gale he and I have weathered together.”

The delighted Donald listened to every word with rapture; his countenance brightened, and he no longer refused to pledge the health of his kind informer, in the sparkling glass; for others in the company now recollected some anecdote of Ned. Still Donald heard with pleasure all they had to relate, and expressed a father’s anxiety to have seen him, even for a few minutes only, before he journeyed homeward.

“And what, my hearty, should prevent your doing so?” said his first friend; “he is at this time in Jamaica, for which port we shall sail with the first fair wind, as we are going out with orders for the fleet, and shall return instantly—but
Ned’s

Ned's ship is to remain four years : such a chance for your seeing him will not happen again. Our captain will give you a passage—and having taken the trip, seen Ned, and satisfied yourself that all is well, you can trudge back to your old wife quite happy.—Only say the word, and I will bring the captain's leave in the twinkling of an eye.”

The grog was already sparkling in Donald's, and had exhilarated his spirits to the performance of mighty deeds. The word Jamaica had awakened recollection to a keen sense of past scenes—it was there he had left the father of Jessy. An opportunity of seeing his beloved boy, satisfying himself upon many points in the strange letter, and perhaps of gaining some information of Jessy's family, presented itself. In his then frame of mind, the temptation was irresistible ; the voyage was short—a few weeks, now that he was so far from home, could be of little consequence ;
and

and then how happy he could return, knowing that at least he had fulfilled his duty both to Edward and Jessy ! For a moment only he hesitated ; when, again called upon to drink to a stiff breeze and speedy meeting with his son, he declared himself ready and willing to undertake the voyage, provided the captain's leave for his passage could be obtained.

This was but the work of a moment ; one of the sailors volunteered to go in quest of their brave commander, and as shortly returned with a young midshipman, who highly enjoying the hoax, which had been explained to him, brought the permission, and as easily persuaded him to accompany his new friends on board their ship for the night.

Unused to such liberal libations at the shrine of Bacchus, Donald slept soundly until a very late hour on the following day ; and on awaking, was some time before he could realize either the present
or

or past; but both were, for his peace, too soon explained. He had passed the evening with a pressgang, who highly enjoying the frolic, had conveyed him on board a sloop of war, then under sailing orders—not for the West Indies, as they had represented, but the Mediterranean, towards which they had been for some hours steering, with a strong breeze, which soon left the last trace of Albion and her snowy cliffs far behind him. And to whom could the deluded Donald complain? Of those who had deceived him not one remained on board the ship into which they had conveyed him as a pressed man; and it was not until worn out by fasting, and the incessant remorse of his own conscience at having suffered himself to be thus duped, that he became an object of commiseration to the ship's crew, to whom he had related his sad story, which by degrees reached the captain; who, however, had no other power of redressing his

his

his wrongs, than by assurances of giving him his liberty on their arrival in England, and humanely concealed the period which was to elapse before they expected to do so; while, to recompence him for the injustice he had suffered, every thing was done to render his situation on board as easy as possible: but weeks, months, and years, had rolled over the disconsolate Donald, uncheered by one promised comfort, till his eager eyes caught the sound of lord Malcolm's name, as his friend pronounced it.

Impatiently he entreated leave to speak to him, and gratefully acknowledged that blessed moment, as he termed it, was worth all he had suffered—that he had laid down a weary burthen from his mind, and should return to Scotland much happier than he had left it. Busy memory, which had so often tortured him on a restless pillow, with the image of Margretta dying of grief, and in her last moments calling on him to re-
turn

turn and save her, now as eagerly caught the benign influence of dawning hope, and whispered even Margretta might yet live to greet his arrival, and forgive him for having left her, when the cause was explained; for hard as fate had dealt with him, he had survived all his trials, whereas she had, he knew, many friends to protect her in his absence, none of whom would suffer her to want.

Edward too, it was possible, had ere this returned to comfort her; for he was now assured, from good authority, that his ship was certainly, as he had first heard at Plymouth, in the West Indies. Several of the seamen, and one of the officers, on board the sloop of war in which himself was, knew him well, and had seen him in good health within a few days of his sailing. Despair, therefore, fled the happy countenance of Donald, as they were each day rapidly approaching the shores of England.

At the habitation of Glendairn, he
learnt

learnt all that had transpired at the castle since the arrival of the family, for few were the events with which Glendairn was unacquainted, as it contained many of his friends, who, though they despised Sinclair, wanted resolution to quit the service of their lord for any other.

To one of these men, Frederick had attached himself; but though the favours which followed in these cases were acceptable, they failed to secure the allegiance he required in return; for gratitude and early affection had bound him to Glendairn, and the confidence reposed in him by Sinclair was in general revealed to his friend the very first opportunity. He had more than once heard him exult in the success of a scheme which had, he said, removed the troublesome father of the pretty Jessy out of his way, and that by the time the old boy had found his son, he would perhaps have a second journey to take in search of his daughter, who, he would take good care, should

should be out of the way before he returned.

To his improper treatment of lord Malcolm, this man was often a witness; and it was through his means that his lordship left the apartment on the memorable morning Mr. Ainsley had met him in the gallery. With such documents, Glendairn could a tale unfold, for which his auditors were little prepared; and when called upon by Mr. Ainsley, as the friend of both lord Malcolm and his son, whom he acknowledged to be the same person his humanity had preserved, Glendairn revealed every circumstance which had taken place prior to, and since the death of the unfortunate Leopold, of whose unhappy story he also knew much.

From the recital of these events, Mr. Ainsley found himself placed in a delicate situation. The wrongs of lord Malcolm called loudly for redress; the claims of his son could no longer be procrastinated,

nated, but much was due to the feelings of lady Madeline; and he was deeply ruminating on the steps he ought to take, when the unexpected appearance of his lordship, and the succeeding events, left him no longer a choice.

Donald, a happy witness of all that followed, and rendered of so much consequence by the attention of his young lord, was become of some importance in his own eyes; and now seated by the side of his delighted wife, had so much to communicate, that at the end of several days she had still something to ask, and he something to relate, which had before slipped his memory; while Gilbert, always a friend to the marvellous, would ever and anon sit him down, and listen in silence to the wondrous tale. Neither was the interest it excited confined wholly to their apartment. Henry, while he deeply regretted his disappointment in not seeing Jessy, as he had once expected, with Mrs. Duncan-

non,

non, heard, with transport ill concealed, her altered circumstances—listened with avidity to the recital as given by his friend, and when she had finished, eagerly exclaimed—“ Now then, my dear madam, every obstacle is removed which your delicacy pointed out, and I may instantly claim lord Stewart’s permission to solicit from lord Malcolm the hand of his lovely daughter. He is not unacquainted with my long partiality for the sweet girl, even as the humble Jessy—it was too interwoven with my existence to be concealed.”

“ But tell me,” said Mrs. Duncannon, “ did his lordship’s entire approbation follow your candid avowal?”

“ Not decidedly,” he replied—“ He named our youth, expressed a desire that I should visit England with him, previous to my entering into any serious engagement, and entreated I would not urge him to make any promise upon the subject, until lady Stewart and himself
had

had seen the object of so early an attachment; at the same time acknowledging himself much prejudiced in Jessy's favour, as the *protégée* of Mrs. Duncannon. Convinced his lordship had only to see her, to own her superiority of mind and person over her whole sex, I waited patiently for your return; but Jessy comes no more to the bourn side, and farther delay is of consequence to my peace; why then should I hesitate to make known my wishes to his lordship?"

Mrs. Duncannon, aware from her own observations that new difficulties were likely to arise, even more formidable than the original poverty of Jessy, felt it a duty to suppress, as much as possible, the ardour of those hopes, which proved Henry's sentiments unchanged—"You forget," she said, "that lord Malcolm, so long deprived of his charming daughter, and to whom he is now devoted, will reluctantly consent to an alliance, however

ever noble, which may threaten to rob him so soon of her society; and as you have no longer any thing to apprehend from Sinclair, I am inclined to adopt lord Stewart's creed, that your age on both sides might well warrant your revisiting England before any important steps are taken."

"But that I am persuaded," he returned, "nothing could diminish the love you bear Jessy, I should be induced to suppose you had lost the warm interest in our cause, and which was wont to be extended to each of us. Can you allow nothing for my impatience to behold her again after such a separation?"

"Still impetuous, my dear Henry," she mildly replied. "I had trusted the placid temper, so conspicuous in your present companion, the lovely and accomplished St. Clair, would have divested you of that quickness, which is your almost only fault, and certainly the only point on which you and I have ever differed.

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differed. But I was going to observe, she is not looking as blooming as when I left her; and yet she tells me she is in health."

Henry, sensible of her many amiable qualifications, had immediately attached himself to her society—was her constant attendant upon all occasions, was lavish in his encomiums of her drawing, music, and every accomplishment in which, as a female, she excelled—and in secret revered her no less for the private virtues, which were best evinced by her boundless charity, undeviating kindness to the neighbouring poor, and the thousand nameless benefits she administered to every child of sorrow, among whom the luckless Mary was a most grateful instance. The measles had torn from her affectionate but afflicted bosom its only solace, the child whose tender caresses had appeared to plead a pardon for the shame its birth had brought upon her. Its death was a shock to her

her aged father, which threatened to hurry him also to the grave that contained his darling; and in silent anguish she contemplated the blow she had no means of averting, for it was the agony of an accusing soul, that sought no relief from the voice of consolation; her sorrow was self-inflicted—of what then could she complain? She was no longer innocent—where then was she to seek a friend, save him whose boundless attribute, mercy, excludes not the sinner black with crimes, *when* awakened to a sense of his guilt, and ever hails the penitent with tears of joy? The grave, she believed, would shortly conceal every remembrance of her earthly fault; but in a world far beyond its dark confines, she trusted to regain the innocence she had forfeited in this.

For these sentiments, she was indebted to the pious admonitions of the youthful Jane—it was she alone who had convinced her that the Universal Friend of

mankind suffers not a sparrow to fall to the ground—that he is ever not only willing but mighty to save, and that to him none can sue in vain.

Many were the hours Miss St. Clair devoted to the real penitent, while unconscious that every visit was marked by him, whose approbation would have been even more gratifying to her than the approving whispers of her own heart, which told her, that in raising the bruised reed she best fulfilled her duty as a Christian; for in Henry Stewart she beheld a being surpassing in excellence whatever she had conceived of his sex—he was a Mentor, on whose judgment, in every instance, she implicitly founded her own—his approving smile was the rich reward of her every action; but such was the delicate purity of her own mind, that she had never dared to analyze the secret springs by which she was actuated towards him: the fond title of “dear Jane,” when he addressed her—the
look

look of approbation, when she produced a finished drawing, or executed a lesson of music, were to her a mine of wealth; and if, when listening to his eloquent praise of Jessy, the fondly remembered friend of his past years, a truant sigh would rise to her lips, it was there suppressed, without one ungenerous wish that no such person existed, or existed, as she believed, *but* for Henry.

In the society of Jane St. Clair, Henry had found a solace for the absence of Mrs. Duncannon; she alone had reconciled him to his removal from the bourn side; and both lord and lady Stewart beheld his increasing partiality with ill concealed transport, so urgent were the reasons which induced them to trust two beings so truly amiable could never reside together, thus secluded from general society, without becoming attached to each other, and to such an event they looked forward with fond solicitude;

and it was for this reason, hoping every thing from absence, his lordship had, in the most affectionate manner, endeavoured to parry Henry's request respecting Jessy.

But they also had remarked, that the rose of health was less brilliant on the soft cheek of Jane, and that her eyes beamed not with their wonted lustre; still she smiled as usual, and the attentive Henry left them no room to surmise a change of sentiment on his part. To Mrs. Duncannon the alteration was even more palpable, and thus reminded of it, Henry's sensibility caught the alarm. On his return to the castle, his inquiring eyes were thrown round the drawing-room in quest of her—but she was absent; she had, however, been recently at the music, for it was still open, and his favourite air lay on the instrument. Without knowing why, he sought her in the library, where, seated in one of the Gothic windows,

dows,

dows, she was contemplating the full majesty of the setting sun; the spacious apartment and matted floor, added to the deep reverie in which she was absorbed, left her ignorant of his entrance, until, advancing towards her, she started at his salutation, with her accustomed smile bade him welcome, and kindly, though in hurried accents, inquired after the health of Mrs. Duncannon, knowing that he had been to the bourn side. On her pale cheek there yet hovered a pellucid drop, and which his sudden appearance had rendered her unmindful of concealing; it was at this moment a most powerful rival to the fascinating smile which played round her ruby lips, for it brought more forcibly to his mind the remark Mrs. Duncannon had made: he fancied a more than usual paleness had pervaded every feature, and his bosom heaved with an emotion he could not define. Without answering her question, he took her hand—it trembled,

bled, for the expressive look he fixed upon her face had excited agitation on her part; and when he said—"Jane, you are ill—for Heaven's sake, why are you here alone?" she felt the necessity of more than common exertion, and in a playful tone, which ill accorded with her sensations at that moment, assured him she was never better in health.

"Why then," he asked, "this trembling hand, this pallid countenance? Think you I am thus easily deceived? I will instantly seek lady Stewart."

"Not," she replied, "until I have accounted for both of these alarming symptoms, whose danger your extreme kindness has thus magnified. It is, I believe, no uncommon thing for us to be agitated by any very sudden emotion; so frail is the human frame, and such, you perceive, is the effect your sudden appearance had upon my irritable nerves; for I was just then so profoundly intent
upon

upon yon glorious luminary, that I did not perceive you until actually startled by your voice; and it is the setting rays, reflecting upon the painted glass, which, no doubt, produced a kind of light unfavourable to the complexion: lead me to the open air, and I prophesy you will smile at your own causeless alarm."

But half-convinced, he accompanied her to the terrace, where the air, of which by this time she stood much in need, enabled her to rally her spirits; but to a less discerning eye than Henry's it was still evident the lily had usurped the rose's bloom, and a new train of reflections occupied his mind.

When retired into his own apartment, he recalled many instances, which tenacious memory appeared to have reserved for the survey of this moment, and he was half inclined to ask his heart, if the sentiments it avowed for the amiable Jane St. Clair were strictly consistent

with those it acknowledged for Jessy? But he endeavoured to persuade himself that the relationship in which he stood to the former, and her charming character, justified the ardent friendship he felt for her; while from a child his heart had fondly clung to the latter, inspired only with the idea that she was become necessary to his existence, and a future union with her indispensable to his peace. But again it whispered, the failure of Jane's happiness would be an alloy to his own, even as the husband of Jessy: he would then see her the chosen friend of a deserving man before he married himself, and thus be assured of her felicity.—“*And you could see her the wife of another man?*” said a little busy agent, whose suggestions he would willingly have suppressed. Prudence would have answered in the affirmative, proud of the prerogative with which, in his hitherto noble mind, she had been allowed to govern all his past actions; but principle

ple bade him decide with caution; and the morning found him still more at variance with his own feelings than he had been on the preceding night.

To his lovely friend the intermediate period had been more propitious; still resisting the impulse, which would have taught her a truth she wished not to know—that she loved a being, however noble, good, or perfect she believed him, who had no affection to return, she saw only the necessity of guarding, as a vigilant centinel, every action of her future life. The unguarded moment in which she had been surprised was a powerful stimulus to the fortitude which she believed every way adequate to guard her secret, but altogether insufficient to support her through the humiliating torture of its being discovered, even by lady Stewart, in whom she had found an affectionate mother since the death of her own, who was her ladyship's only sister, and had been dead

some years. For Henry's uncommon anxiety respecting her, she was wholly at a loss to account, but as resolutely determined to give him no opportunity of repeating a solicitude, which might be dangerous to her future peace: this she thought an easy task, for over her own pliant mind she held more command than is commonly exercised by young people of the present age, only because, contaminated by the modern productions of too many circulating libraries, they fancy it more delightful to become the love-sick heroine of real life, than by true greatness of soul to conceal from the prying eyes of curiosity that preference which, until secure of a return, their native delicacy would not allow them to confess even to themselves.

Thus armed, she met Henry at the breakfast-table, cheerful and unembarrassed: to the usual inquiries respecting her health, she answered with assurances

ances of her being well. Perhaps the colourless cheek gave a contradiction to that assertion, for the faint blush which tinged it as she spoke, faded with the sentence she uttered; and as her spirits appeared nothing diminished, lady Stewart, imagining that exercise would be the best restorative of the bloom whose loss she regretted, proposed a ride to Mrs. Duncannon's, for the purpose of prevailing on her to return with them: this was readily assented to, and weeks passed on in that pleasing intercourse so congenial to kindred minds.

CHAPTER V.
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A BETTER knowledge of Jane St. Clair could not fail to render Mrs. Duncannon a sincere friend of hers, for she believed her a counterpart of Jessy, and *only* inferior to her in personal beauty. With the interested eye of real friendship, she marked her conduct towards Henry; but it betrayed no symptom of regard incompatible with her relationship to him; and she spoke of Jessy at all times in terms which proved she had formed no idea of rivalling her in the affections of her cousin.

But Henry had become more reserved: there was not that restless impatience to  
visit



visit lord Malcolm which he had once expressed, and this she attributed to the little encouragement she had given him to do so on her return: there was, she fancied, a degree of tenderness in his attentions to Miss St. Clair, that she would more willingly have seen confined to Jessy, had she been quite certain of lord Malcolm's intentions with regard to his daughter, and impatiently expected the promised letter from her young friend, the contents of which might, she thought, enable her to form some judgment how she ought to act respecting each: and it was during a visit of some days at Dunwarden Castle, that Gilbert rode over with the welcome epistle. Henry, who had taken it from him, and to whom the hand was familiar, hastened to the drawing-room, and by the pleasure he expressed in naming the writer, tacitly reproached Mrs. Duncannon for the suspicion that Jessy could be less dear to him than ever.

Having



Having given her the letter, he left the room to accompany Jane in a ramble, "which," he said, "his impatience to hear the news would prompt him to shorten." But anxious to peruse it alone, she did not attempt to detain him, and no sooner had he quitted the apartment than she perused the contents:

"Why, oh why, my ever dear madam," she wrote, "did you leave us at a moment when your society was alone wanting to complete our entire felicity—at a moment when I appear so much to require your affectionate counsel? but indeed I have never yet known the period in which your presence was not essential to my happiness. But I must tell you, our expected visitors arrived two days after you left us, and it is requisite to give you some idea of them; yet, strange as it may seem, it is a task to which I feel inadequate, from a conviction that I shall fail to do them justice.



justice. They are certainly not common characters; hence my wish that you had remained with us, to have passed your own judgment. I know you will accuse me of injustice to Henry, and I acknowledge his superior claims to your invaluable society: still had you staid but until they reached Tantallan Castle, I think I should not now be addressing you at the bourn-side; for, pleased as you were with the excellent Mr. Ainsley, there is an irresistible attraction in my father's friend—a magic in his countenance that charms every faculty, and leaves you no wish but to remain near him. My father is incessantly lamenting that business obliged him to procrastinate his journey to the north, which was, however, too important to be neglected—no less than his being reinstated in the navy, which was, I find, his original profession. But lord Malcolm asserts, it will not recompense him for the loss of seeing you—‘ For in Mrs.

Duncannon,



Duncannon, my dear Charles,' he added, 'you would have found a kindred soul.' With a smile, of which I can give you no idea—an elegance peculiar only to himself, he said, raising his eyes to my father's face—'As the friend of lord Malcolm's family, I must have respected Mrs. Duncannon; her character, to which, you know, I am no stranger, could not fail to secure my esteem, and I am left to regret not having arrived in time for a personal interview; but you have not yet to learn, Malcolm, that it is only in the dark grave Moncrief must seek his kindred soul.'

It was the last sentence visible to her dim sight; a faintness seized her, and the letter dropped from her trembling hands, as she exclaimed—"Can my senses deceive me? Peace, throbbing heart, until I can connect the great chain of events, which could alone restore me such a blessing." With the rapidity of lightning,



ning, her thoughts reverted to lord Malcolm's account of the years he had passed in slavery, during which period he had been dead to his family: his friend, Moncrief, the beloved friend of her early years—the betrothed husband of her affections, had been still longer dead to her; but was it less possible, that destiny had placed him also in captivity, from which he was now emancipated? She dared to hope—for to her firm mind nothing was deemed impossible; but such was the agitated state of her feelings, that it was with some difficulty she could finish the letter.

“ You have, however, interested me so much,” he continued, recovering in an instant the serene composure, the self-command, which conceals from common observation his hidden grief, “ that I shall anticipate Mrs. Duncannon's return to the castle with an impatience not very natural to my general character.” Again, then,”



then," Jessy wrote, "let me entreat you to shorten your absence as much as possible; for in addition to this excellent man, whom I revere more than I can express, as the preserver—the saviour even, of my father, I have another friend, to whom you must be introduced, and of whom I have as yet said nothing, and yet he too is deserving of much esteem: had I never known Henry Stewart, I should decidedly think Hector Ainsley the finest young man I ever saw. 'But his heart,' said my father, when he requested my opinion of his young friend, to whom he is devotedly attached—'his heart, Jessy, *where* only we look for manly beauty, I know to be the seat of every virtue; and if indeed he must yield the palm of personal beauty to your old favourite, I must, without seeing him, pronounce the son of lord Stewart to be a finished masterpiece of dame nature's performance; for I consider Hector Ainsley a faultless specimen of her work, and  
had



had hoped my daughter would have met her father's wishes.' His lordship said no more at that time, but there is certainly some important secret in the cabinet, if I am to judge by the various expressions of countenance each at times puts on, and whatever its purport, lady Madeline is in the committee; but it should seem that she also is more than ever anxious for your return, and begs I will, in her name, say she is most impatiently looking forward to the promised period. May we trust Henry will accept my father's invitation to Tantallan Castle, where every one is anxious to see him? or is every claim of the humble Jessy lost in the daughter of lord Malcolm? As such she may be allowed to greet him with every sentiment of esteem, while to you, her dearest friend, her more than mother, she offers every tribute of gratitude and affection, from the devoted heart of

JESSY."

Henry



Henry was again at Mrs. Duncan-non's side, before she had recovered the perturbation into which she had been thrown: he had hardly allowed himself time to ask what he expected to hear, or what Jessy could say, as most conducive to his happiness; but the agitation he found his friend in left him only power to inquire—"What could possibly have happened?"

It was a question which, for the moment, increased her embarrassment, because unprepared with an answer; she however acknowledged herself indisposed, but added—"That as the effect had been sudden, she trusted its duration would be short."

"And is it," he said, looking tenderly at her, "on Jessy's account I see you so visibly distressed?"

"No indeed," she replied; "I am happy to say, the sweet girl writes in high spirits, is very urgent for my return, and again repeats the entreaties of  
lord



lord Malcolm that you will accompany me to Tantallan Castle. Tell me, Henry," she continued, wishing alike to divert his attention from herself, and to check the current of her own thoughts, until, retired in her own room, she could arrange them in some order, "are you really still as anxious to visit his lordship as on my first return to the bourn side? I expect candour, you know, and am prepared to prophesy, there is a magnet not less attractive in Dunwarden Castle than the fair luminary at Tantallan."

Pressing her hand fondly to his lips, he said—"Your discernment has left me nothing to avow; my heart, tutored only by your inestimable counsel, from its earliest remembrance, must ever be open to your inspection; you alone can best read it—you only help me to define what is at present inexplicable to myself. Reared and educated with Jessy, acquainted with her perfections of mind  
and



and person, has not my attachment to her strengthened with my years? Have you not been sensible of an affection, which I never attempted to conceal from you? She is still dear to me—my heart at this moment would fly to meet her—pants to clasp her in the sacred embrace, which would prove incontestibly how fondly she has been remembered. Tell me then, why, with these sentiments, do I feel that a being, no less amiable than herself, has claims upon me which I want the power to resist? If I have really loved Jessy, where is the shield which should have preserved me from a second passion? Years of absence have neither diminished nor erased one charm of hers from my faithful memory; yet am I for ever contrasting every charm, every virtue she possessed, with those which, no less conspicuous, adorn the mind and person of Jane St. Clair; but, while neither of them lose by the comparison, my future happiness is endangered:



gered: devoted to both, I am perhaps considered but as the friend of each. That Jessy once loved me, I am privileged to believe: as the daughter of lord Malcolm, her sentiments may have changed; his lordship, too, as you once observed, may have other views; and such is the delicate propriety of my lovely cousin, that nothing short of a declaration on my part, sanctioned by lord Stewart, could wrest from her sentiments which it is of consequence I should discover. Thus situated, ought I to visit Tantallan? for you alone can determine—to my own judgment I dare not trust.”

“And yet,” said Mrs. Duncannon, “you have proved how competent it is to guide you through this labyrinth, in which you have discovered difficulties easily obviated, and others that do not really exist. You look incredulous,” she observed; “I will therefore be more explicit, since your sincerity has enabled



me to be so. In the first place, you have altogether mistaken those sentiments which you felt for Jessy: passing, as you did, so many years with her, in a retirement which left you more opportunity of seeing her amiable qualities as a lovely child, it was not very astonishing you should become attached to her, when, myself excepted, your affections had no other object to rest themselves upon, and objects to which we are really attached seldom lose their influence: in absence there is a soothing pleasure in reverting to the past, in recalling to our remembrance scenes familiar—friends whom we loved; and the enamoured mind, pleased with the retrospect, dwells on it with a transport, that gives to such scenes, such friends, a value doubly enhanced by their loss. Had you seen Jessy what she now is, previous to your acquaintance with Miss St. Clair, 'tis more than probable you would have required no other shield against the united  
charms



charms of her whole sex ; as it is, your lovely cousin cannot fail to become a powerful rival ; and that you are no longer master of your own affections I have for some time been aware, nor is your happiness in so much danger as you apprehend. Too much commendation cannot be given to that truly feminine delicacy, which, struggling with a virtuous and laudable preference, would still persevere in its concealment, until a conviction of its being requited left that concealment no longer necessary. Such, if I mistake not, and I am not easily deceived, are the sentiments of lady Stewart's niece ; nor do I think myself wrong in asserting, that *you* can bid those roses bloom again, which concealment alone has blighted. I am persuaded both lord and lady Stewart would be rendered happy by a prospect of your union with the lovely Jane, and in contributing to their happiness, Henry, in this point, believe me, you will most effectually secure your own."



“But shall I also insure that no less necessary to my peace?” he eagerly inquired; “for in this truly fascinating picture you have excluded Jessy—will she indeed be rendered happy by my union with another?”

“Jessy,” replied Mrs. Duncannon, “is altogether a stranger to your sentiments respecting her; she remembers you with real affection as the companion of her early years, to whom she is literally indebted for many of the advantages she possesses—remembers your instruction with gratitude—your kindness towards her, as a peasant’s child, with those sentiments which do honour to her understanding; and had you, while thus fondly remembered, sought her in your present character, and solicited her hand from lord Malcolm, I had entertained no doubt of your success. But destiny has evidently willed it otherwise, and a few months will perhaps determine the fate of each; for there is at this time a visitor at the castle, who will in the end, perhaps,



haps, prove a powerful candidate for Jessy's favour. I have before mentioned the expected arrival of major Ainsley, of whom she speaks as being a decided favourite of lord Malcolm; and this I can readily believe, from the affection which binds him to the father, who is a character not common in this world. You will now, I am convinced, see the propriety of my having more than once restricted the youthful ardour which would have prompted you to avow yourself the impassioned lover of Jessy, before you rightly understood your own sentiments. From not having met under this misguided influence, you are now left free agents; and each, I trust, will make a choice that will ultimately lead to their own happiness. Loving both, as I do, I might perhaps have wished it had been differently ordained, but a perfect reliance on the Supreme Wisdom, which can alone rightly direct all our actions, has ever made me bow with



humble submission to the Power which cannot err. Independent of this, I have a detestation of the modern fashion, called match-making, in which too often the convenience of every party, save those to whom it is of the utmost importance, is consulted."

"Générous, best of women!" said Henry, as she ceased speaking, "you have indeed reconciled me to my own feelings, and opened to my relieved heart a prospect of real felicity. Assured that Jessy had accepted the addresses of major Ainsley—that he was every way worthy such a prize, I would no longer hesitate to plead my own cause with Jane St. Clair, who, Jessy excepted, is the only woman I have ever seen, to whom I could intrust my happiness."

"I do not," said Mrs. Duncannon, "aver that such an engagement is to take place between our young friend and major Ainsley, but merely to state its probability; a few letters, however,  
may



may unravel much—Jessy is too ingenuous to prevaricate, and for the sake of both, I shall be equally explicit as to my own observations of passing events. Patience, you know,” she added, “is said to be a feminine virtue, but I am far from believing it confined to our sex wholly; it is, however, a favourite motto of mine—I have *very* often had occasion to practise it under severe trials.”

And she might have said—“Never was it more keenly tried than at this moment;” but this would have been a deviation from her character: her advice, counsel, and assistance, where she had the power, were at the command of all who sought her confidence; but in her own concerns she acted from the dictates of her heart—to its recesses alone confined those sorrows she ever concealed from the world; and to this resolution, which she had adopted through life, she still adhered, anxiously solicitous for the fate of both Henry and Jessy, which,



from concomitant circumstances, she believed drawing to a crisis. She had embraced the opportunity, so favourable to her wishes, of ascertaining his real sentiments, and for the time forgot how deeply she was herself interested in the contents of the letter, which had led to a conference so essential to all parties, and which, though long, had been uninterrupted by one intruder; for lord and lady Stewart having letters to write, had retired for that purpose; and Miss St. Clair, reading Henry's anxiety to return, had strolled to Mary's cottage, on a pretext of inquiring after her health, but which was in reality to occupy the time, in which she knew he would be listening, perhaps with rapture, to the account of his fair friend, as given by Mrs. Duncannon, who having indeed rendered Henry more happy than for many weeks he had been, sought her own apartment.



CHAPTER VI.  
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ONCE more at liberty, she again perused the first part of Jessy's letter—pressed to her trembling lips a name which for so many years had not met her sight, and asked her palpitating heart if it could vibrate thus powerfully, had it been that of any other than him whom through life she had loved with undiminished affection.

She now recollected, that during lord Malcolm's recital of his own adventures, he had not once mentioned his friend's name, except as Charles; but the character he described bore so sweet a similitude to that Moncrief, whose memory her soul treasured—the lapse of years which had intervened—the profession in



which he was now reinstated—all, all corresponded; bending, therefore, in adoration to Him who alone ordereth all things, she poured forth the grateful effervescence of mingled joy and gratitude—arose from her prostrate posture with renovated spirits, and joined the family group, who were eagerly expecting her, with a countenance calculated to relieve the anxiety they expressed for her health, and which Henry had awakened, by recounting her indisposition on his first entering the drawing-room—“ But which, you should have added,” she replied, looking significantly at him as she spoke, “ had wholly subsided before you left me.”

“ Why, to tell you the truth, my dear madam,” said his lordship, “ there is a little contradiction in the whole of Henry’s conduct this evening; for I could tell you two or three absurdities he has committed, independent of his appearing in most excellent spirits the moment after  
he



he had said you were taken very suddenly ill; and when Jane, at the request of lady Stewart, was hastening to your room in consequence of his information, he very gaily forced her to a seat on the sofa, told her that he knew you wished to be alone, and he could not then spare her."

"There was perhaps more policy in that than your lordship is aware of," returned Mrs. Duncannon; "he was fearful I should be induced to turn traitor, and betray——"

"Nay then," said Henry, eagerly interrupting her, "if I am to be thus assailed in every quarter, for wishing to set a good example by my gaiety, I will positively turn the tables, by assuming the gravity of an anchorite for the rest of the evening."

"Against that I declare," said lady Stewart, "for Jane is already trying the experiment, and I vow another serious face would give me the horrors; there-



fore let it be Momus, if you please ; for, now assured Mrs. Duncannon is really well, I feel disposed to be in most excellent spirits myself."

This assertion was alone sufficient to exhilarate the whole party ; for the impaired state of her health, though much improved since the recovery of Henry, confined her often to her own room, and added much to depress her spirits, which were, however, naturally good. Cheerfulness therefore was the order of the evening, and to Miss St. Clair only the exertion was painful ; but she persevered, and retired to her own room for the night, unsuspected of the violation which she had put upon her feelings.

Watchful of every movement, she had first discovered the unusual manner of Henry, which she attributed wholly to the pleasure he had derived from the contents of Mrs. Duncannon's letter. He had spoken of his invitation to Tantalum Castle, and the probable result of  
that



that visit pressed hard upon her sad heart, for she believed him fondly attached to the amiable girl with whom he had been reared, and in consequence seldom failed to put a construction equally erroneous upon all he said respecting her; but hitherto she had eluded the penetration of every eye, by the self-command she practised, and now reached her own apartment, exulting in the success of her hard-earned victory; but on that pillow, to which her throbbing temples were pressed, she sought the relief so necessary for the repetition of her daily task, unconscious of her own superiority over the rival claims of Jessy, which, as they declined, gave strength to hers.

Mrs. Duncannon, deterred from renewing her visit by the very means Jessy had used to accelerate it, prepared on the next day to answer her letter, in which she inclosed the following note for lord Malcolm :—

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“ The



“ The character of your inestimable friend, as given by your lordship on the eve of my leaving the castle, needed not the finishing hand of your charming daughter to excite a warmer interest in his welfare than I then felt; but she has taken the most effectual method of doing so, by inserting his name. Could I reconcile myself to believe that *two* such characters might have existed under the same title, it would be needless to make the inquiry, which only your lordship can satisfy. Have you ever heard Mr. Moncrief name the family of admiral Douglas? If so, tell him there yet exists a friend, enabled to speak comfort to his silent sorrow. You will need no other authority for this assertion, than the name by which I have the honour of subscribing myself,

“ Your lordship’s

“ Most obedient

“ Humble servant,

“ HELEN.”

Having



Having dispatched her letter, she strolled to the cottage, of which, by the munificence of lord Malcolm, Donald was become the possessor; for, attached to the spot on which he had spent so many years, he had, when left a choice of a future residence by his lordship, entreated permission to return to it, and where Mrs. Duncannon had now the satisfaction of seeing him and the good Margretta possessed of every comfort that could render the winter of life desirable; and could they have known the fate of Edward, not a wish of their aged hearts would have remained ungratified—but he was still absent, and no letter had reached them since Donald first left Scotland; but they contented themselves with the reflection, that if he no longer existed, they had lived to see him cleared from the base aspersions which had alone driven him from his native home.

Convinced by the persuasive eloquence  
of



of Miss St. Clair, that there was more actual sin in the concealment of the crime she had committed against Edward than in the commission of it, under the circumstances by which she had been influenced, Mary gladly made the only reparation in her power, by revealing, with tears of unfeigned sorrow, to his worthy parents, the extent of her guilt; nor was the pardon she solicited withheld even for a moment. Pitying her misfortunes, each pressed her alternately to their bosoms—blessed her for the justice which, though late, she had done their son; and as they shed over her tears of joy, heartily wished Edward might even yet return to reward her for all she had suffered. She mournfully shook her head, as she remembered the honest pride which would most deservedly shun so frail a creature, and she thought as proudly reject a heart, which was nevertheless still devoted to him alone. But in the recovered affections of Donald



nald and Margretta, she felt a source of comfort to which she had long been a stranger, and which she cultivated with assiduity, by passing as much of her time with them as she could possibly spare from her father, who was sinking fast into a second state of childhood.

She was leaving the cottage as Mrs. Duncannon entered it, and having answered her kind inquiries relative to the health of herself and the old man, proceeded onward, with the downcast mien which had marked her deportment from the period of her disgrace. But scarcely had Mrs. Duncannon seated herself by the side of Margretta, when she returned, and, with a look of wildness, sunk upon the first chair she could reach.

“ I would entreat your pardon, madam,” she said, as Mrs. Duncannon arose to assist her, “ but I was so terrified I could go no farther—He is coming this way, and I dared not pass him. Tell me only where I shall go to avoid him



him now, for indeed I cannot see him meet his mother."

"What do you mean, child?" said Margretta, in agony—"Who have you seen? What are you talking of?"

"Edward!" she replied, straining her eyes towards the window; "indeed he will be here before I can move. What will become of me!"

Margretta, regardless of every other object, had flown to the door, and the screams she uttered sufficed effectually to deprive the poor penitent of the little degree of strength which she had exerted.

In the vain hope of reaching the inner room, she had fainted, and in that senseless state was supported in her chair by the humane arm of Mrs. Duncannon, when Donald, Edward, and a stranger, entered the cottage. The extravagant embraces of his almost frantic mother, as she hung round his neck for some minutes, rendered him unconscious of what was  
passing



passing in another part of the room, until, aroused by the exclamation—"She is certainly dead!" he extricated himself from her encircling arms, and approached the spot where Donald and the sailor were, by the commands of Mrs. Duncannon, rubbing her hands, while she, no less kindly, chafed the temples of the yet insensible girl.

Clasping his clenched hands to his forehead, he exclaimed—"Then I am come too late—Never will she survive to know how dear she is to my heart! Cursed villain! thou alone hast done this."

Unable to bear a sight so harrowing to his senses, he retreated to the door, followed by Margretta, who assured him she would recover—that she had but fainted, and would come to. In a few minutes she did so, but was many more before she could be prevailed on to believe Edward had expressed a wish to see her, and then entreated Mrs. Duncannon  
would



would plead her pardon with him, asserting it was all she dared expect.

The strange sailor, unused to such scenes, had left the room unperceived, to conceal the tears which, in defiance of his efforts to suppress them, chased each other in quick succession over the rude furrows of his weather-beaten face; when Edward, having respectfully pressed the hand of Mrs. Duncannon, extended to him as a token of past acquaintance, kindly took the trembling one of Mary, and in faltering accents inquired how she found herself? Conscious her presence was a restraint upon the reconciliation which she knew would follow, Mrs. Duncannon left the cottage, after desiring Donald to bring Edward on the following morning to the bourn side. This he promised to do, and returned to relate to Margretta where and how he had met the dear boy; but Edward, already seated between his delighted mother and his still-loved Mary, was satisfying



fyng the anxious inquiries of each, as he fondly encircled them in his honest arms.

The story was short, and soon told ; for no incident uncommon to a sailor's life had marked his (to them) long absence from Scotland. His ship had been ordered on a cruize immediately after he had forwarded the letter which assured them of his health and safety, from which it returned to Plymouth, and refitted for the West India station, where he remained until, the period of their orders being expired, they again set sail for England. Shortly after their arrival, the ship was condemned as unfit for sea, and many of the crew, in consequence of their meritorious conduct and faithful services, paid off. Among that number was Edward and the seaman who had accompanied him to Scotland, wishing, he said, to see a little of the world, and having no better way of spending his money, which he expected would last him the trip,



trip, when he should again sling his hammock, and out to sea.

Edward had more than once written home, but had little hopes of hearing from them in return, while so far distant, and contented himself with thinking they were all far more happy than himself; for his heart, still clinging fondly to its first, its only love, and goaded by the remembrance of her wrongs, and the calumny which had driven him from her, continued still to hover on his native shores, “dragging, at each remove, a lengthened chain.”

Once more at liberty, he ardently turned towards his fondly-remembered home—every past-gone pleasure of his early years arose in sweet review before his enraptured fancy; but, foremost in the anticipated pleasures that awaited his return, was the affectionate welcome of his aged parents—the sweet Jessy grown up to woman—and, lastly, though ever nearest his beating heart,  
poor



poor Mary, whom he had long since forgiven, and now anxiously desired to see again, criminal as she had been ; but time had softened the remembrance of her venial fault, for which he could make a thousand excuses—her inexperienced youth, and the too-successful efforts of the villain who had seduced her.

Attached to the messmate who was now his companion, and had long been the confidant of all his wrongs, he had pressed him to take the journey, on an assurance of a hearty welcome at his father's abode, which invitation the sailor readily accepted.

Arrived at his native village, they stopped at a house of entertainment, partly for refreshment, but more to obtain the information, which the beating heart of Edward, as he drew near the seat of former joy, the beloved cottage which he had so abruptly left, suggested as necessary. For the time he was  
assailed



assailed by fears for the safety of those it once contained ; perhaps he had no longer a father to bid him welcome—grief might have deprived him of the “ mother who watched o’er his childhood ;” and, soul-harrowing thought ! the “ bosom friend, dearer than all,” had too probably sunk under the sorrow which he had once witnessed : but these self-created evils, the reflection only of a joy too extatic to be believed real, were in a moment dispersed, as, on looking through the window, he beheld the smiling countenance of his happy father, trudging gaily homeward to the plentiful repast, which his good and faithful conduct towards the child of lord Malcolm had rendered every day certain, and at which his affectionate old wife would expect his coming with transport nought abated.

Darting from the house with an arrow’s speed, he soon overtook him, and  
in



in breathless eagerness exclaimed—" *My father!*"

Mutual were the endearments, mutual the inquiries; and both had heard sufficient to satisfy minds like theirs, before they reached the new home to which Donald, proud of his late acquired possessions, now conducted his no less happy son, who, gratified by the assurance that Mary had justified him in the eyes of the world—that every well-remembered neighbour, satisfied of his innocence, would greet his return among them with sincere pleasure, would have as cheerfully entered a mud-built hut as the enlarged cottage; on their arrival at which, his father, resting on his trusty oaken stick, and proudly surveying it, exclaimed—" This, Edward, is your father's own property, and, thanks to the benevolence of his lordship, will descend to thee, my child, and thy children's children."

Edward smiled as he entered the door,



at which, with extended arms, he met his astonished mother—"And you will not leave us again?" said Margretta, as he finished his little narrative.

"Never!" he exclaimed, as he turned his impassioned looks towards Mary, whose eyes no longer met his with the artless expression of joy, which innocence was used to heighten. His forgiveness had soothed her agitated mind; but the genuine avowal that she was still dear to him—that in so many years, even believing her so unworthy of his remembrance, he had never loved another, was a degree of happiness to which she dared not aspire; it rendered her still more unworthy in her own eyes, and she believed it impossible she could sustain such a change of fortune, and live; but her poor father, infirm as he was, might yet be rendered sensible of his favourite's return, and all his goodness towards her, his guilty child; there was ecstasy in the thought; and Edward slept not  
unti



until he had fulfilled her dutious wishes.

On the following morning he waited upon Mrs. Duncannon, with whom he found Henry, already apprised of his return, and from each he received the welcome due to his real worth, and their former acquaintance.

Each kindly applauded his generous conduct towards the penitent Mary, whom, he assured Mrs. Duncannon, it was his intention to make his wife, whenever he could prevail on her to accept his hand, but that at present she hesitated, and persisted in believing, after what had passed, she ought not to consent to his wishes, although she acknowledged he had ever been the object of her unchanged affection.

Mrs. Duncannon promised to use her influence in his favour; and he left her to make a round of visits among his old friends, that none might accuse him of neglect, or for an instant think themselves forgotten.



The honest tar, who accompanied him from house to house, was so delighted at the reception he met with, and the warm wishes expressed by one and all for his continuing among them, since he had come back, that he declared himself more than half inclined to bring-to for life among the good souls, whom he already found he should be unwilling to leave when the time came for his doing so; and Edward declared nothing could give him so much pleasure.

Not many days had witnessed the now uninterrupted happiness of the worthy cottagers, for Mary, more reconciled to herself, again smiled, and all was harmony, when Miss St. Clair, who had been passing some time at the bourn side, where Henry was also a daily visitor, called Mrs. Duncannon's attention to a servant in strange livery, who, though still at some distance, was evidently approaching the house.

Henry,



Henry, who, in a distant part of the room, was amusing himself with a favourite dog, first reached the window, and as instantly proclaimed it lord Malcolm's servant.

Convinced her own letters could not have reached Tantallan Castle in time to admit of his being the bearer of answers, Mrs. Duncannon anxiously awaited the man's alighting.

Gilbert for *once* forgot his love of talking, and having only staid to give the messenger a hearty shake by the hand, in token of old acquaintance, hastened to the drawing-room with his dispatches, which, however, contained only a single letter, addressed to Mrs. Duncannon, in a hand which could not for a moment leave on her agitated mind a doubt of the writer. Apologizing to her young friends for leaving them a few minutes, she hastened to her own apartment, and eagerly perused its short but satisfactory contents:—



“ In the deserts of Arabia, on the burning sands of Indostan, or the frozen shores of Iceland, under any name to which that of Helen was affixed, in characters never to be effaced from this long sorrowing, but faithful heart, I should recognize the affianced wife of my bosom ! In lord Malcolm’s house to see that name venerated, as I have done, by every individual, would render doubt more than insanity. I have pressed it to my burning lips, laid the paper traced by your hand near my throbbing heart ; and, after such a conviction that she still exists, the world would be a space too small to detain Moncrief from Helen !

“ Scarcely can my impatient soul brook the cruel restriction of prudence, that Malcolm tells me is necessary to prepare you for our meeting. He adores, and with reason, the exalted, amiable Mrs. Duncannon, but he knows not my Helen, and to what the uncommon energy of her mind is equal ; I  
have,



have, however, submitted to be governed by friendship, and, in obedience to his wishes, say a few hours will bring to her blest seclusion the impatient

“MONCRIEF.”

## CHAPTER VII.

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ON the evening of the day in which Jessy had written to Mrs. Duncannon, the conversation had turned upon the subject of their late amiable visitor, and as usual lord Malcolm regretted her absence, which he said he however trusted would be short.

“I have communicated your lordship’s wishes, together with lady Madeline’s and my own, that it might be so,” she replied.



“ And you were also privileged,” said Mr. Ainsley, “ to have added mine, if it could have strengthened the cause, for she is decidedly an acquaintance I would go far to obtain ; and were I a few years younger, should feel myself in danger of becoming her devoted slave.”

“ She is,” returned his lordship, “ one of the most elegant women I have ever met with ; and to her many accomplishments adds one which, in my estimation, rates among the highest a female can possess, that of writing an inimitable hand.”

“ I should really, my dear Malcolm, be inclined to think your partiality for Mrs. Duncannon had induced you to rather overrate her many perfections,” said Monerief, “ and would assert you must have drawn a picture which existed not in real life, *but* that I once knew a character no less exalted—a pattern of excellence, moulded in an angel’s form : but Helen was more than woman !”

“ Why,



“ Why, that name appears to have been set apart to distinguish female excellence,” returned his lordship, “ for Mrs. Duncannon’s name also is Helen ; and I will dare venture to affirm, in favour of my favourite, that your friend could not have surpassed that hand-writing,” taking from his pocket-book some lines, which were the production of Mrs. Duncannon, and signed Helen D.

Scarcely had the astonished Moncrief perused them to the end, than clasping the hand of lord Malcolm, he said—“ I am indeed convinced, not that my friend could have surpassed them, but that the characters are her own. Tell me no more Mrs. Duncannon will return here, but where I shall find her, for this moment I must be gone—a day, an hour, now is agony ! I read your astonishment,” he continued, “ surveying the interested party, and yours in particular, my friend, for even to your bosom I have never revealed my deeply-rooted



sorrow. I told you my little share of earthly happiness was consigned to the silent grave, for I believed it encompassed her I loved. I mourned her dead, and your oppressed heart had too many accumulated miseries to need the addition of mine: I am now satisfied the friend I have mourned and yours are one—why under another name, I have yet to learn, but it can no longer conceal her from my anxious researches. Say, Malcolm, will you not this instant accompany me to the beloved seclusion in which for so many years she has practised an angel's virtues, dispensing her benevolence to the children of want? This has been her exalted conduct under afflictions which would have crushed more than half her sex. This indeed might raise her in your estimation, did you know what she has suffered—from what a pinnacle of happiness torn—and by whom!"

"Nothing," replied his lordship,  
"could



“ could exalt her more in my eyes than she assuredly is, unless it were seeing her wife to the only man who could possibly deserve her ; but even he, I find, requires to be reminded that this precipitancy ill accords with his general character, and might be attended with serious consequence to his amiable friend, who, as unprepared as ourselves for the strange event which has taken place, will need some little preparation, previous to an interview on which so much may depend. I will accompany you with pleasure to the bourn side, and for many reasons am very desirous of going there ; but this night must be devoted to tranquillize your agitated feelings—to-morrow you must write to Mrs. Duncannon, and we will follow our courier at a convenient distance.”

For some time Moncrief parried his friend's proposal, with assurances of such precaution being altogether unnecessary, but at length yielded to the suggestions



of lord Malcolm, aided by those of the worthy Ainsley ; and it was agreed that on the following day they should set out, travelling by easy stages, as neither his own health, nor that of his lordship, was equal to the wishes of Moncrief, which would have allowed him neither rest of mind or body.

Mr. Ainsley and his son remained with lady Madeline and Jessy. Anxious as were both fathers that the friendship so many years subsisting between themselves should finally be more strongly cemented by the union of their children, neither had attempted to influence them ; but so similar were the minds of each, so formed alike to please, it was hardly possible they should long remain indifferent to each other.

Major Ainsley beheld her at first with admiration ; but the love which succeeded it was founded on the perfection of mind which he well knew would survive even the wreck of that beauty, over  
which



which time or disease might exert its power, while the lasting beauties of innate loveliness, more durable, would still shine with added lustre. Under these impressions, he sought her friendship.

Not less aware of his worth, and won by his unceasing assiduities, she had learnt to regard him in a light equally favourable to the wishes of lord Malcolm.

Seymour Duncannon (for as such only she had ever known Henry) was a model of perfection, that she had constantly treasured in her youthful imagination; and she had once thought there existed not a being so perfect. Even now, when contrasted in her remembrance with Seymour, Hector Ainsley's features wanted an expression she could not describe; his eyes were less animated, and his forehead was deficient in that polished whiteness, over which the fine hair of Seymour was used to wave in luxuriant ringlets. Still Ainsley was  
allowed



allowed a more than common share of manly beauty; and in the comparison of their minds he was a far less loser, for there indeed was stored a mine of wealth—all that could exalt the man, ennoble his nature, and complete the gentleman.

Lord Malcolm had marked the growing esteem, which he foresaw would engender love; and as he pressed the hand of the elder Ainsley at parting, emphatically pronounced—"All, my friend, will be as we wish it."

No time had been fixed for their return; the period of it was, however, by the calculation of the party at the castle, still distant, when a servant arrived with a letter from his lordship to Mr. Ainsley, announcing his probable return on the following day:—

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"You will rejoice to hear," he wrote, "that Moncrief has not deceived  
ed



ed himself: in our amiable Mrs. Duncan he found the friend for whom, as dead, he mourned—But more when we meet, which will, I trust, be in a few hours. I have, as you may suppose from the above information, left my friend at the bourn side, but am not suffered to return alone: lord Stewart has consigned to my care the loved companion of my Jessy's early days, the accomplished *protégée* of Mrs. Duncan, who is indeed all that they have represented—All, did I say? they have not done justice to his exalted character; but you must see him, my Ainsley, and judge for yourself, since it is only having done so, you can believe how proudly I shall present him to the world as my future son—Nay, start not, my more than friend—tax me not with ingratitude, call me not mutable, when but an hour spent with Henry will justify the conduct of

“MALCOLM.”

Scarcely



Scarcely believing he had read aright, Mr. Ainsley again perused the mysterious letter—but it was only to increase his surprise ; every wounded feeling, as a father interested in the fate of a child so beloved as Hector Ainsley, so meriting his love, remonstrated against the injustice of lord Malcolm, who had not only deceived him, but the young people, whose happiness, he felt convinced, would become the sacrifice of these altered sentiments, and he mentally exclaimed—“ Ungenerous Malcolm ! has a reverse of fortune so soon obliterated every sense of your own past misery, that you can thus composedly trifle with the peace of an amiable child, whom Heaven has so unexpectedly restored to you ? Your own heart may acquit you of this violation of friendship and affection, but it shall never influence me to sanction a conduct so unworthy of yourself, however amiable and deserving this new favourite may be.”

The



The young folks at this moment entered the apartment with lady Madeline, whom they had been attending in a morning ride, and Jessy having seen the servant, eagerly demanded when they might expect his lordship?

Without replying to her question, Mr. Ainsley put the letter in her hand, and telling Hector he had business with him, retired.

Many and varied were the emotions with which she perused its contents. A grateful transport thrilled every sense, as she read that part which related to the inestimable Mrs. Duncannon, to augment whose happiness her own would have been made a willing sacrifice. She was to see Henry, the loved companion of her infant days—it was ecstasy; but the following sentence awakened sensations less pleasing—a faintness crept round her sick heart—Hector Ainsley usurped every thought, and in conjecturing what he would think of her



her father's intentions, she forgot every being connected with it, until roused from her reverie by lady Madeline's asking if she had not yet finished the letter, and if so, what it contained?

Entreating pardon for her involuntary neglect, with trembling hands she consigned it to her, and again relapsed into thought.

Lady Madeline, to whom her brother had confided his ardent wishes, that Jessy's voluntary attachment to the son of his best friend might enable him to pay his debt of gratitude by uniting the families thus nearly, was not the least astonished party, when she had read a declaration which so decidedly annulled every former sentiment, and she could only articulate—"It is altogether incomprehensible."

"And yet too clear to be misinterpreted," said Jessy. "Poor Hector!" she continued, "how little reason had he to expect such treatment from the friend of his father!"



father! But I trust he will acquit *me* at least of ingratitude; for although his lordship's will shall ever be held a sacred law, to which I will yield implicit obedience, to your ladyship I candidly confess the task, in this instance, will be severe, and that only a sense of my duty could render me adequate to it. Surely the inestimable worth of Hector Ainsley, when it was too exalted to be witnessed with indifference, should have been held too sacred to be trampled upon thus. I know what Henry Stewart was, and believe he can never cease to be an ornament to his sex. Why then, I would ask, but that it becomes not a daughter of lord Malcolm to arraign his conduct, why was a character nothing short of his placed before my admiring senses, with liberty to indulge my own sentiments in its favour—nay, almost persuaded into doing so? Fatally, I fear, for his peace, too assuredly so for mine, has my father postponed his wishes, which to have  
sooner



sooner made known, had been more kind to me—more honourable to major Ainsley.”

So thought lady Madeline; but the keen sense of what Jessy must feel was lost in the impatience she already felt to see this paragon, who had wrought such a revolution in her brother's sentiments.

At the dinner-table, where they again met the gentlemen, Jessy's embarrassment was increased by the pensive expression that marked the features of major Ainsley; his father had lost all that vivacity, which even at his years rendered him so desirable a companion, and an acquisition to all society; and scarcely had the servants left the room, when he inquired if her ladyship had any commands which Hector could execute for her in London, whither he purposed setting out on the next day?

“Impossible!” she returned; “he must not leave us in my brother's absence; and indeed,” she said, with increased



creased tenderness, "I trust there will then be no necessity for his doing so at all."

"I shall wait his lordship's return," Mr. Ainsley replied, "for it will be expedient that I should see him; but I have no longer a motive for retaining Hector in the north, and, in obedience to my wishes, he will leave it immediately."

At that moment the eyes of Hector Ainsley met those of his lovely friend, and they told him more than the most tender assiduity on his part had ever yet obtained from her; but it served only to increase the agony with which he remembered he was to lose all hopes of aspiring to her, at the very instant he believed himself dear to her. To him she was more than existence, and he looked forward to the residue of his life as a chaos, dark and uninteresting. Twice he essayed to address her, but had not succeeded,



succeeded, when a servant announced the arrival of a courier, who preceded his lordship, the sound of whose carriage was shortly after heard.

Struggling with the varied emotions of love and duty, Jessy exerted herself to regain that degree of composure to meet her father which her prudence dictated as a respect due to him, while an affection, which had grown up with her, and of which, even at this moment, she could not divest herself, whispered it was a tribute due to Henry.

Pride alone gave Hector Ainsley a command over his wounded feelings, which, he believed, would effectually secure him from the commiseration of lord Malcolm, and the triumph of his more happy rival. Something like resentment against the friend whom from a child he had loved, and whose every fault he had found an excuse for, ruffled the naturally mild disposition of the elder Ainsley, and



and lady Madeline grew more restless as she heard the echo of her brother's footsteps along the spacious hall.

He spoke, and the beloved sound harmonized every feeling of his affectionate child. Springing from her seat, she approached the door, and was in a moment encircled in the arms of her adoring father. Those of Henry were fondly extended to receive her, and to them his lordship, having imprinted a paternal kiss on her glowing cheek, transferred her, saying, as he did so—"Receive her, Henry, as, next to yourself, my dearest treasure."

Major Ainsley, unable to contemplate the scene, rested his throbbing temples against the panel, near which he stood, while his father and lady Madeline waited in silence for the introduction which lord Malcolm, as he continued intently gazing on Henry and Jessy, appeared to have considered as totally unnecessary. At length, recovering himself, and leading  
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ing Henry towards her ladyship, he said —“ Will you not love him, Madeline, for my sake? I have not yet to learn how he will reverence lady Madeline Sinclair as my sister.”

Gracefully bending on his knee, and raising her hand to his lips, Henry respectfully kissed it, and arose in silence to meet the salutation of Mr. Ainsley, to whom his lordship said—“ Ainsley, my friend, cannot your generous heart find room for the additional claim Malcolm would make on it for this my son? See him, all that the fondest father could wish ! Hector,” he continued, approaching him, “ I would give you a friend worthy of your affection; if you really love Jessy, you cannot disown her brother.”

“ What can your lordship mean ?” he returned. “ By the love you bear my father, trifle not with my feelings !”

“ Pardon me, my dear young friend,” said his lordship, “ if I have given you  
a momentary



a momentary pain, and let what I have to impart recompence you for it. I have indeed found a son; but the blessed discovery will not render it less requisite that you also should be such to me; my heart has long considered you in that character; nor will my sweet Jessy esteem you less from having a brother to share her affection with you."

His lordship might have continued to speak, undisturbed by a single question from one of the party, so effectually had astonishment chained every tongue; but every eye rested in admiration upon the young stranger, and spoke in favourable language what was passing in each heart.

Mr. Ainsley first broke the interesting silence by observing, that had he met the young gentleman to whom they were thus introduced a few months since, previous to his hearing the melancholy fate of his lordship's son, he should have wanted no inducement to believe, from



the strong resemblance he bore lord Malcolm, that it could be no other than his lamented Henry; but that he now impatiently awaited an elucidation, which could alone reconcile him to what he had just heard.

Lady Madeline, not less struck with the likeness to her brother, affectionately entreated him to terminate their suspense, since she could no longer doubt the relationship.

His lordship having enjoyed the transport of a father in reading the general approbation excited by the prepossessing appearance of Henry, promised to satisfy all doubts, if any remained, as to his having imposed upon them with an assertion of his near affinity—"But as," he added, "it will be requisite to proceed methodically in the incidents which have transpired from the period of our reaching the bourn side, it will be also necessary to inform you, that as our impatience to reach the castle before dark left



us but little leisure for refreshment during the last part of our journey, both Henry and myself will stand in need of something like it, before we enter upon the great chain of events which have been permitted to bring up the history of my life. In the meantime, let me again assure you, that in this dear boy you see the son and heir of my house—the child of my Adela, whose loss she found it impossible to survive—him whom I supposed the merciless waves had torn from us, but whom a merciful Providence reserved in the hour of danger, and in pity to the parents whom it afflicted, consigned to an earthly angel, commissioned to dispense its blessings on all around her. Well might Moncrief say his Helen was more than woman; nor does there exist a being worthy of such excellence, himself excepted. Look, Ainsley,” he continued, “at my children—formed by the model of her exalted mind, endued with



her virtuous principles, and say what, as a father, I do not owe her?"

"Much more than you can ever repay, my good friend," he replied, extending his hand, which Henry eagerly clasped, as, leading him towards major Ainsley, he said—"Hector, I have hitherto proudly acknowledged you as my only child; my heart now expands for the admission of a second son, whose claims, I already feel, are powerful. Let me, in your future conduct towards each other, see you only as brothers, whose interests and affections are one."

"Gladly, my dear sir," he returned, "I accept the sacred title; my heart, hitherto unused to the rapture of fraternal ties, pants to receive the welcome inmate, where he will find no rival, save his lovely sister."

Henry, already prepared by his father to esteem Hector as the future husband of his beloved Jessy, independent of his  
own



own merits, warmly returned the affectionate embrace which sealed the compact thus made by the delighted fathers.

Lady Madeline, charmed with his whole deportment, in turn clasped him to his affectionate bosom, but involuntarily sighed as she contrasted her amiable nephew with the too-worthless child whom she had lost; while Jessy had no words to express the emotion of joy and gratitude which actuated her overcharged heart: all were too much interested in ascertaining by what means the discovery of Henry's birth had been effected, to admit of their resting for the night unsatisfied. His lordship had therefore no sooner declared himself sufficiently recruited to give the promised detail, than the happy group drew their chairs around him, every countenance animated by the anticipation of events in which they were so deeply interested.



CHAPTER VIII.  
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“So determined,” said lord Malcolm, “was Moncrief to cherish the fond belief he entertained of having found a friend, whose loss had embittered so many years of his past existence, and added every thing to the horrors of slavery, that my endeavours to moderate the expectation which, I foresaw, left him so unprepared for a disappointment, were ineffectual; and I must own I was less sanguine than himself, even after I had heard the history of his past life, on which, during the years we spent together, he had never voluntarily entered, and which, restrained by motives of delicacy, I had never urged him to relate.

“At

“ At the end of our third day’s journey, we had scarcely alighted at the house where we were to pass the night, than the servant entered the room with a packet, addressed to myself, which, he said, was given him by a person sent express to Tantallan Castle, but who having arrived a short time before me, had requested him to deliver it to his lordship, whose commands he then awaited.

“ It contained a letter addressed to Jessy from Mrs. Duncannon, and a second for myself, which I impatiently opened, apprehensive its haste boded no good. Eagerly Moncrief watched my countenance, for neither to him was the hand unknown; but its contents sufficed to remove every latent suspicion from my mind of the identity of his amiable friend, while it effectually confirmed every delightful sensation, that whispered it was indeed his own Helen, the daughter of his revered friend and

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benefactor,

benefactor, the noble Douglas, and *his* affianced wife, who, equally satisfied from my Jessy's letter that the Moncrief of whom she spoke bore too much resemblance, even in the description, to warrant doubt, had written to entreat I would satisfy her inquiries as to the leading points on which her expectation was founded.

“ Scarcely less anxious than himself to reach the bourn side, from my anxiety to restore to each other two beings so deservedly dear, I became no less regardless of personal inconvenience than he had been, and on the following morning resumed our journey, which we pursued without intermission. I had known enough of each to be satisfied, that no farther precaution was necessary in their meeting, therefore drove directly to her house: for a moment Charles was agitated, and grasped my hand in silence, as the door was opened for him to alight; but, combatting the feelings of nature,
which

which would have weakened those of the man, he followed me to the room in which our mutual friend and favourite, supported by the fortitude which had enabled her to sustain his loss, and which she now exerted to meet him, awaited our introduction.

“ The scene which followed will never be erased from my memory, and might, from its purity, have given a foretaste of those extatic joys—those divine raptures, with which two virtuous souls, having passed the barriers of death and the grave, might be supposed to meet and recognize each other, in those blissful regions of eternity where their earthly faith had been registered by spirits pure as their own; for each believing the other no longer, like themselves, an inhabitant of this mortal sphere, had for years looked forward to a reunion in that world where the rectitude of their lives empowered them to expect the re-

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ward

ward of their pious resignation to the ills of this.

“ But I must now,” said his lordship, “ give you the interesting account, which I received from Moncrief, of the past events in his life, previous to our arrival at the bourn side.”

It was heard with attention ; and sympathy for his sufferings mingled its sweetest tribute of manly commiseration with the soft tear of feminine sorrow which bedewed the eyes of lady Madeline and her lovely niece ; and lord Malcolm, having again brought them to the interview which was alone wanting to complete the happiness of his enraptured friends, proceeded—“ As Mrs. Duncannon had, in my history, already heard much that related to Charles, it remained only to account for the circumstances which had placed him in slavery, and which she became anxious to hear.”

“ My

“ My unexpected return to England,” said Moncrief, “ was in consequence of bearing dispatches to the admiralty, which from their tenor had doubtless, but for the events which followed, been a means of ensuring me promotion. It was late when I arrived in town, and being detained, even longer than I expected, by their lordships, I was hurrying into the street, for the purpose of taking a coach to convey me to a hotel in the vicinity of sir Arthur’s neighbourhood, from which, while preparing to pay my respects, I intended apprising you of my sudden arrival; but as I quitted the admiralty, my speed was arrested by a brother-officer, who, as he shook me heartily by the hand, inquired how I meant to dispose of myself for the evening?—‘ Most probably,’ I replied, ‘ at sir Arthur Moreland’s, if the family is in town, a point I have yet to ascertain.’—‘ Come with me then,’ he eagerly exclaimed, ‘ for I have something of

1 6 importance

importance to communicate, and which, from being connected with that family, it is right you should know before you meet them.' Without a suspicion of what that communication might be, I readily accompanied him to his own lodgings, where he asked when I had last heard from Douglas? well knowing the intimacy which had always subsisted between us, as also my long attachment to his lovely sister. Without reverting to the coolness which had so imperceptibly pervaded our past friendship, I answered—'Not since I last left England; and that the period of my return to it had been too short and unexpected to have as yet reached him, even by report.' 'Then,' he replied, 'you have not heard the report of his sister's marriage?' With phrenzy, which ill requited his disinterested friendship, I exclaimed—'And who has dared to assert so black a falsehood?'—'Moncrief,' he said, with a coolness my unguarded heat, the result of
agony

agony I could not suppress, had not ruffled, ‘commiserating, as from my soul I do, the feelings I am obliged to wound, my friendship is not to be deterred from serving you, even though it should incur your resentment: hear me, for you must do so,’ seeing me about to interrupt him, ‘hear from him, who, interested for you, is willing and ready to assist you in any capacity consistent with a man and a friend, what the less feeling world will blazon to your ear—that the ward of sir Arthur Moreland is at this time the wife of Dorville, and that, if not already on the road to visit his family in Ireland, they are on the eve of leaving London for that purpose.’—“Helen,” said Moncrief, surveying her with tenderness, “even at this moment my soul has not lost a sense of its bitterness at that instant; I gasped for breath, gazed wildly on him, alike doubting if I had heard aright, or, having done so, could believe a friend had thus pierced my bursting heart.

heart. Helen lost to me was a curse, so far surpassing what I could support, that by what means it mattered not—in my existence she was the wheel whose movements stimulated every faculty ; it was deranged, and all subordinate ideas were suspended—a misery too powerful for endurance had usurped the soft-soothing affection that actuated all my actions, and supported me under every circumstance—reason, dethroned by the sudden shock it had sustained, relaxed its powers, and would probably have left me, from that momentous period, a wretched maniac, if my friend, marking the effect his information was likely to produce, had not fortunately adopted the only method likely to stimulate me to a sense of my injuries, by arousing my resentment against the authors of them. ‘I would have told you,’ he said, ‘who was the enemy of your peace in this transaction, but that it should seem you are not anxious to discover the means by which
you

you have been deprived of the amiable Miss Douglas, whose happiness is certainly not increased by a marriage concluded in so much haste. That Dorville loves her, no one can doubt, for who might not? but with an avowed gamester, where is her chance of earthly felicity?'—' Yet tell me,' I demanded, interrupting him, while my heated brain at once suggested the idea of destruction to all concerned in the vile scheme against me, ' tell me who is the base destroyer of Moncrief's happiness—who urged on the fatal marriage, and wherefore did it take place—that I may seek the revenge suited to my wrongs? for no longer can the same earth contain Moncrief and the hated husband of Helen Douglas.'

" A repetition of the to me dreadful title added fever to my tortured imagination: I saw you dragged a victim to the sacred altar, by the tyranny of sir Arthur, and the vile passion of
Dorville,

Dorville, and had recalled so many instances of Archibald's late conduct towards myself, that when my friend asserted he was far more culpable than the weak sir Arthur, or even Dorville, to whom he was indebted for large sums contracted at the gaming-table, I readily assented to his opinion, and determined no longer to delay claiming the only satisfaction left me.

“The generous fellow, who had thus prevented my going in person to sir Arthur's, while unconscious of what awaited me, then kindly offered to attend me as my second, in the appointment which my agonized hand made with Dorville. Having named the purpose, I entreated him, as he valued the common rights of humanity, not to bring Douglas as his friend, feeling, as I did, his now detested sight would unnerve the arm my injuries should strengthen. I might have foreseen how little regard would be paid to the entreaties

entreaties of a creature whom their united efforts had thus destroyed, and whom they would have gladly extirpated from the earth.

“Dorville, as you already know, on the following morning obeyed my summons, attended—Oh, Helen! by whom? How gladly would I have shut out from my aching eyes a sight so painful to them! how ardently have obliterated from my torturing memory that he was the son of my revered, lamented Douglas—the brother of my lost angelic friend! He would have spoken to me, but my justly-incensed spirit refused the overture—revolted at a conference which could not mitigate his crime. When I had received Dorville’s fire, and while supported in the arms of my friend, I again saw Archibald approaching me, but my spirit was then fast receding—I believed myself dying, and was happily insensible to the assistance, I afterwards learnt, he afforded them in placing me in
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the carriage stationed near the spot, and in which I was conveyed to the house of my friend's mother, some miles distant, and in the neighbourhood of a small village, from which a surgeon was procured, who, on examining the wound, which was near my breast, pronounced all hopes of a recovery futile, not only from the direction of the ball, which was however extracted the same night, but by the irritation my frame had sustained in the distance I had travelled, and the loss of blood occasioned by the motion: to this was added, the agitation which for so many hours had distracted me. For some weeks, as he had prophesied, my recovery was more than doubtful: I lived, but, it appeared, neither to a recollection of the past, nor with any apparent design for the future; for my enfeebled body still required unremitting attention, and my yet more feeble mind had not recovered sufficient energy to inquire into the particulars of my situation.

“ When

“ When my friend received orders to join his ship, anxiously interested for me, he had been indefatigable in his endeavours to gain every information of import to my welfare, that in the event of his being called away, he might arrange some plan for my safety, and which, on the death of Dorville, became indispensable.

“ The elopement of lady Moreland, and the supposition of Archibald being the companion of her flight, daily gained strength; the distress of sir Arthur at the unmerited disgrace, and the decline of his once affluent circumstances, were also loudly whispered—and those events he related in the hope of interesting my dormant faculties, while he as carefully concealed the state to which, it was rumoured, my lovely friend was herself reduced.

“ The necessity which compelled him so reluctantly to leave me determined him also to remove me still farther from
London,

London, fearful the first use I made of returning health, which, though slowly, he flattered himself would finally reward the assiduities of his excellent mother, might be to hazard my safety, by the means he was assured I should take to see my Helen. Having therefore consulted the surgeon, to whose goodness I was not less indebted than to his own, on the probable effects to be apprehended from my travelling in that weak state, he was gratified by an assurance that it could not injure my health, and might be attended with advantage to my oppressed spirits, on which a change of scene would perhaps operate favourably.

“ My friend had a married sister residing in Cornwall, whom his mother had not seen for some years, and it was instantly settled that she should take this opportunity of visiting her, and that I should be the companion of her journey.—In the affectionate reception, the
happy

happy society of a family so truly hospitable, I could hardly fail to recruit my exhausted strength ; for no methods were left untried to facilitate the humane purpose which prompted them to so kind an interest in my fate ; and it was in their secluded mansion I recovered to an acute sense of all that had transpired since my landing in England with the dispatches, and I began to revolve on the steps I was next to pursue ; but for this my excellent friend had also provided, in a most affectionate letter, which he had left in his mother's care, with injunctions not to deliver it until satisfied my mind had recovered sufficient strength to enable me to profit by it, when he felt convinced I should see the utility of the advice it contained, and not fail adhering to his wishes. This was, after clearly explaining all that had passed, and the intelligence he had gained of the parties concerned previous to his leaving London, that I should,

should, on the more perfect recovery of my health, proceed to the continent for a short time, as concealment was still indispensably requisite ; and to enable me to do so, he inclosed an authority for my drawing upon his agent, by the name of Edwards, for such sums as I might require until the return of his ship to England, when other plans could be adopted, which his sudden orders and my state of health had rendered impracticable on his quitting me.

“ The manner in which his offers were proffered, and my own knowledge of both his heart and abilities to serve me, left me no alternative ; and his solemn entreaties, that I would not risk a discovery of my person by inquiries after the amiable widow of Dorville, which he urged as being alike indelicate to her and dangerous to myself, determined me to rest, at least for a time, on the assurance that he would not fail to forward me every information he could obtain on
his

his return, which he expected would be shortly, when he should expect to find a letter from me, saying where, on my arrival in France, I had taken up my abode. It was, however, some time before I could prevail on the kind family with whom I resided to consent to my departure, as they still maintained my health was not sufficiently recovered for the undertaking; but their greatest apprehensions arose from the state of my mind; and I at last left them, with a shattered constitution, and still more broken spirit; but had no sooner arrived on the continent, than I became weary of the inactive life to which I had been so unused.

“ I had written to my friend, acquainting him with my residence, and to the good family in Cornwall; but the period of a return to my first letter was uncertain: restless and uneasy, I dragged on an existence no longer endeared by one soothing remembrance, and this impa-
patience

tience my letter breathed in every line. I believed I should have felt more happy, nay reconciled, could I have breathed only the air of that country which held my adored Helen, lost as she was to me; and it is probable that, alarmed by my assertion, and dreading my return, he was induced to word his answer in terms so ambiguous, that my disordered mind, seeing only the sombre shade, because best suiting its tenor, instantly suggested that he knew her gentle nature had sunk under the shock it had sustained, cautiously as he conveyed the information to me: again he entreated I would not think of returning to my native country, as I valued his friendship; adding, he had hopes of obtaining leave of absence, when he would assuredly join me on the continent for a short time, and would more fully explain the contents of his letter.

“ But destiny had begun its work—
Supported under the additional sorrow
derived

derived from my own conviction, that I had survived the adored woman whom I cherished as the wife of my bosom, by the hope of again seeing my inestimable friend, whose presence was become more than ever necessary, I had still something to look forward for—but that friend was, alas! no more; and while anticipating his arrival, a letter from his distressed sister, written in all the bitterness of first grief, announced her irreparable loss: pleurisy, the effect of a violent cold, taken by over-exertion in his duty, had deprived her of an affectionate and deeply regretted brother—his mother of an exemplary son, without the gratification that can alone reconcile us to the loss of friends so dear—one interview, one parting look. For some days my only employment was to read over his invaluable letters, to recall his manly virtues, and lament that I, who had no longer a tie to earth, who would so willingly have laid down a

painful existence, should have been thus spared, while he, in the bloom of life, with every prospect of fame, fortune, and domestic comfort, was no more.

“Sorrowfully I surveyed the future prospects of my own life—they were cheerless and gloomy; but the violence which had at first agitated me by degrees subsided, and my mind, gradually emerging from the despair which had absorbed its former principles, recalled the obligation I owed to the family of my valued friend. The easy competence in which they lived left the favours I had received, both from him and themselves, of little estimation in their sight; but gratitude demanded a return, and every sentiment of honour revolted at the idea of my continuing a dependent upon their generous friendship; for, under the pressure of an affliction justified by the extent of their loss, they had entreated me still to consider them as friends, not only interested in my fate,
but

but who would consider my claims upon them sacred, and whose purse was still at my command, as was their house, whenever I could return to it with safety to myself. This added proof of their disinterested affection for me was the greatest stimulus I could have received : the propriety of arranging some plan for my future subsistence became indispensably requisite, and in a short time I succeeded in obtaining an appointment as supercargo to a vessel fitting out by some merchants for the Mediterranean; and so advantageous to my employers was the result of my voyage, that I was entreated to undertake a second to the same port we had before sailed to.

“ During the short period I remained on shore, I wrote to my Cornwall friends, named my then pursuit, and answered their affectionate inquiries after my health with grateful assurances of its amendment; but the good genius who

had presided over my first voyage now slept. We were chased by a corsair, deprived of liberty, and conveyed to their barbarous coast, from which, for me at least, there was no prospect of escape—no hope of freedom; for when questioned as to the ransom which would be given, I candidly answered, they had none to expect; nor was my fate long undetermined: stripped, as is their usual custom, and exposed to sale in their public market-place, I was at last sold, with two only of the crew who had sailed with me, to the same master, and conveyed to his residence many miles up the country. From what circumstance I know not, but it was soon visible to his household that I was daily growing into favour with Hamed Halisaad.

“To divert my mind from the painful retrospect of departed joys, I turned all my attention to the language, which was become essential to even the few comforts destiny had left me; and had

no sooner acquired some degree of proficiency in it, than my master honoured me with his approbation of my conduct, and complimented me upon abilities, which I was sensible he over-rated. From this time I was a decided favourite, consulted upon all occasions, and often accompanied him to his different residences.

“ I was now removed, I believed for ever, from my native land, which indeed no longer held for me a relative tie or connection; for of the latter I had no remembrance. My father, an old lieutenant of admiral Douglas, was killed in action on board his own ship, and my mother survived him but two years; I was then seven years of age, and my inestimable benefactor, the revered Douglas, instantly adopted me, brought me up with his own family, and placed my little property so judiciously for my interest, that it afforded me the same education he gave his son;

and I know no other friends: I had however survived them all, and looked forward only to the moment in which, by a patient resignation to the Power which had separated me from them, I might dare to hope I should be reunited to my Helen in a blissful eternity. It therefore mattered not from what barbarous shore my emancipated spirit would soar to hers: trusting only that the period would be transient—that at most a few fleeting years would set the captive free, I determined passively to wait the joyful summons, and beguiled the lingering space by a strict obedience to duties required of me, and in soothing, by every means in my power, such of the wretched slaves who, from the difference of their situation, and the kindred ties from which they had been severed, were even less happy than myself.

“ The two seamen, who had been purchased with me by Hamed Halisaad, died

died within a twelvemonth after our captivity; and for many following years the dull monotony of my own life afforded nothing sufficiently important to retain a place in memory.

“ Many and ineffective were the entreaties of Hamed Halisaad, that I would embrace the religion himself professed; and had his persuasive arguments prevailed, by conquering what he termed my fatal obstinacy, it is probable, from the attachment he evinced, I should not long have been considered a slave. ‘Embrace,’ he would say, ‘our blessed faith, the only one by which you can be saved, and become at once the friend, the son of Hamed Halisaad.’ But that was not possible: my expecting soul rested too firmly on that faith which had been my anchor through every storm of my unhappy destiny, and was yet my security against every attempt to wrest it from my fond grasp. But my unshaken adherence to a religion

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gion which Hamed Halisaad ridiculed as fallacious did not deprive me of the friendship which contributed so much to my comfort; on the contrary, it added a sincere commiseration to the regard he so publicly manifested towards me; and I have still reason to believe he retained me in the capacity of a slave, but in the hope that it would at last induce me to accept the only means of rising superior to the degrading situation.—But such I continued when lord Malcolm was added to the unhappy number, who dragged on a weary existence under the too-severe Hassan, the treacherous overseer of Hamed Halisaad.”

“And now,” said his lordship, “as the iron voice of time’s awful memento has vibrated through the hall, proclaiming the hour of midnight, you will suspend your curiosity for the sequel of my narrative until to-morrow, as the delay will rather enhance its value, and a few hours rest enable the
interested

interested orator to display greater abilities in delivering it to his no less interested auditors."

Acknowledging *that* interest had rendered them unmindful both of time and his fatigue, each promised to rest satisfied, in the conviction that his lordship had given a most welcome addition to their affectionate circle, and that they could patiently wait to be made acquainted with the means by which he had effected it, as nothing could appear improbable, after the singular events which had so rapidly succeeded each other during the last few months.

Looking archly at his son, his lordship said—"This, Henry, is all mighty well; you know *now* that some of the party are quite convinced your claims do not interfere with theirs, but I am not quite satisfied that the son of lord Stewart would have been quite as graciously received beneath lord Malcolm's roof."

“Aye, now,” said Mr. Ainsley, wishing to relieve the embarrassment of Jessy and Hector, occasioned by his lordship’s raillery and Henry’s smile, which spoke his ready belief that it would have materially altered their good opinion of him, “if you refer to the very mysterious event which has introduced him here under any other character, we shall most certainly become impatient to learn what possible circumstance could have effected the transfer, which is indeed too wonderful not to excite a degree of curiosity, which it requires some self-command to repress; and I vote that your lordship again take the chair, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, for under such peculiar circumstances the house cannot possibly adjourn.”

“If that is the case,” replied lord Malcolm, “I must e’en make good my retreat while the members are standing,” (for each, in consideration of his lordship’s

lordship's want of rest, had arisen to take their leave for the night, until thus detained by the lively sallies of Mr. Ainsley), "that you, my good friend, may have leisure to practise the self-command for which, however, I do not give you your usual credit, else why the serious countenance which, on our meeting, told me plainly—Ainsley has said to his heart, *could* Malcolm have done so?"

"Quarter! I beseech you," replied his facetious friend; "and having answered your question, we will each wish your lordship *bon repos*. I perused your letter without a clue to unravel a mystery for which no subsequent event had in the least prepared me: can you wonder I should ruminate on its contents? The happiness of an only child was concerned, and it was the father, not the friend, who doubted."

"And where," returned lord Malcolm,

colm, as they parted for the night, “is the father who, possessing such a son, would not have been equally interested in his welfare?”

CHAPTER IX.

NEVER had morning dawned upon a group so exquisitely happy within the ancient walls of Tantallan, as that which greeted the entrance of lord Malcolm in the saloon, where, while extending a hand to each, his expressive countenance glowed with the benign transport which at once bespoke all the finer feelings of father, brother, and friend; and again surrounded by the relative ties, on which he gazed with increasing affection, he resumed his interesting detail—“All that
that

that I have left unsaid of my valued Moncrief, and his not less valued Helen, your own affectionate hearts can realize. On their mutual happiness there is no longer a drawback, and to their immediate union there can be no obstacle, save that which their friendship, in defiance of all opposition on my part, has raised, and of which we will speak hereafter.

“ On the day following that which marked our arrival at the bourn side, I was introduced to the truly amiable family at Dunwarden, who came to pay their respects. In the countenance of both lord and lady Stewart I read a benevolent philanthropy, which demanded, even on a first visit, my warmest esteem, and for their lovely niece I felt even still more interested. The natural softness of her features was increased by a pensive cast, which irresistibly attracted my attention, and I would have instantly pronounced that some hidden
source

source of uneasiness preyed on the pale cheek, had not the bewitching smile which graced her mouth lured me into a forgetfulness of my first observation, and induced me to believe such a beautiful creature could not fail to be happy; for who would not conduce their utmost to render her so?

“ Henry was the next object of my interested scrutiny : I saw him all that I was prepared to expect; and while I allowed every thing for the attachment of Mrs. Duncannon and Jessy to him, only wondered if it were indeed possible that, residing constantly together, a still stronger attachment had not already subsisted between himself and the lovely Jane St. Clair. But I was not many days left in doubt—an affection, virtuous, pure as theirs, needed no disguise, and was revealed in every action. I saw much of Henry, and hourly felt an increasing partiality for him, which I cherished with pleasure. Often he brought

brought to my painful remembrance the beloved boy whom I had lost, and though I never envied lord Stewart the possession of such a treasure, often have I wished that my cruel destiny had spared me a similar blessing, nor dreamed it was in reality about to restore to my bereaved arms a son—to the house of Malcolm an heir so deserving of its proud honours, its ancient dignities.

“ It should seem I had one evening passed the cottage of our worthy Donald (who appears to have been made a merciful instrument in the restoration of all my blessings), accompanied by Henry, who was returning with me to the bourn side, when we chanced to attract the notice of the honest sailor, who, it appears, accompanied Edward to Scotland, and with whom he had been taking a trip, as he calls it, through the country, from which they only returned the day before. Margretta, as Donald relates the tale, bestowed on us, as we passed,
her

her usual benediction, adding—‘ Lord Stewart is a very good creature, and a fine gentleman, but I never see that excellent young man without wishing he was son to my lord Malcolm, they are so like to each other—and then he always loved Jessy so much.’

‘ If that is lord Malcolm,’ said the tar, ‘ he does not look old enough to have such a son.’

‘ But, in good troth,’ she replied, ‘ had his lordship been fortunate, as he was in every thing else, he would have had a son nearly the age of lord Stewart’s, and no doubt quite as handsome, for it is said a finer child was never seen—and I can well believe it. When his mother died of grief for his loss—poor soul! she lived but one fortnight after the dreadful accident—indeed, one may say, she landed in Jamaica in a dying condition—never shall I forget what a beautiful creature she was!’

The fine eyes of lord Malcolm swam
in

in tears of unabated affection, as he repeated this humble tribute to his Adela's memory; but suppressing his feelings, he continued—"The sailor interrupting Margretta, demanded what she meant by an accident at Jamaica, and if lord Malcolm had ever been out of Scotland?

'Lord bless you!' she exclaimed, as if every one was as well acquainted with my story as herself, 'was he not in the West Indies with us? and did I not nurse his sweet little girl?—aye, and bring her to Scotland too, and——'

"She was proceeding to relate the whole business, when the seaman again interrupted her by saying—'But tell me, my good Margretta, was his lordship always a lord?'

'Why no,' she replied; 'all that you would have known by keeping silent. Sit down now, and I can tell you the whole story.'

'Only answer me this question,' he returned,

returned, ‘and I will hear you out—was he a lord in the West Indies?’

“Having satisfied the inquiry by a second negative, she compelled him to hear a detail of events which in nowise interested him, until she spoke of my unfortunate shipwreck, when, starting from his seat, the impatient mariner exclaimed—‘It must then be him, as sure as fate! Well, I did it for the best, and will tell his lordship the whole truth. What say you, my honest soul?’ he continued, addressing the astonished Donald, whom at the same time he shook violently by the hand, while Margretta, believing him insane, fearfully drew her chair closer to Donald’s, ‘think you lord Malcolm will believe me if I tell him his son is not dead?’

‘He would be glad to do so, I have no doubt,’ was the reply, ‘but on that head he is too certain, I fear—for the ship on board of which he left him went
down

down before they were well out of sight.'

'True enough,' said the sailor, 'but not before I had leaped into the boat, which was alongside, with young master in my arms; and a lovely child it was, but so frightened by the storm, and my rough nursing, that I was at a loss how to pacify him, until he fairly sobbed himself to sleep. All this time, by the obstinacy of the men who undertook the management of the boat, we were driving about at the mercy of the waves—had lost all sight of the other boat, and expecting every instant to be lost ourselves, and I have no doubt should have perished, but that towards morning a small sail hove in sight, and, in answer to our signals of distress, lay-to for us to get alongside. In this we succeeded with some difficulty, and I was no sooner in safety than I began to think what on earth I was to do with the child, who again cried most violently; while

while my companions, relieved from their danger, laughed at me for the trouble I had brought on myself, as it was almost certain the boat in which his father and mother had embarked must, from its crowded state, have swamped—and even if they had by good luck reached any shore, they were lost to me, for the vessel on board of which we had now got was bound to France. For the child's sake, I almost wished I had leaped in after his father, and shared his fate, though almost the impossibility of doing so had made me spring to the other side of the deck, and take my chance with such of the crew who, rendered desperate by being refused a passage in the first boat, had launched the small gig, at the hazard of every wave overwhelming her.

‘ Judging the poor infant must be hungry, I was begging some soft bread of the steward, to whom I was giving the account of his being in my charge, when

when the captain returned on deck, and desired me to follow him below with the child. I was then told to repeat all I knew concerning him, which, God knows, was little enough; for I had never seen him until the night of the shipwreck. The gentleman sometimes came on deck during the voyage, and I heard he had a wife and child in the cabin, for I was not on board when they first embarked. I remembered also hearing the captain call him Mr. Malcolm; and when I saw him in such distress, and no one to assist him (for it is at such times every one for themselves), I gladly offered my services, when he eagerly thrust the child into my arms, and entreated me to keep quite close to him and the lady, who, with a great deal of difficulty, for she was very ill, he got to the side of the ship.

‘ Seeing the boat was already full, and that it was in vain to lose one moment, I crossed the deck, and made for the gig,
in

in which I obtained a seat, just as they were putting off; but from that time we knew nothing of the first boat.

‘ A female passenger, whom I found in the cabin, and who taking the child from me on my first entrance, had succeeded in quieting it while I was speaking, now asked if I was willing to give the child up to her?—that she would take care of it, and bring it up as her own, unless she should ever find its right parents, to whom she would restore it in safety. Her husband then assured me, they were people of property, well able to maintain it, and had no children of their own—that they were going to reside in Lisle, and would give me a proper direction where to find them whenever I thought proper, if hereafter I wished to know how the little boy was treated.

‘ Most gladly I accepted the offer, for it relieved me of a heavy charge, and the next day I had the satisfaction of seeing the

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the poor child quite reconciled to the good lady, who devoured him with kisses, and seemed to doat on him. When asked his name, we made out Henry, but it was not plain, for he was too young to talk; however, it sounded like it, and the lady said was most likely so, as the letters on his shoe-knots, which were gold, had ‘H. M.’ on them.

‘When we landed, they gave me a paper where to find them in Lisle, by the name of Montague; and to satisfy myself, I went once to see them, before I got a ship. I was treated very kindly, and plainly saw I could not have found better friends for the poor boy, who would clearly be brought up a gentleman; and feeling I had done my duty by him, I soon afterwards set out with a light heart on a voyage to the East-Indies, and from thence to England, where, in a frolic, I entered on board a man of war, and never afterwards went to France. But I am now convinced, in
my

my own mind, if his lordship will send a proper person to Lisle, he will hear more to his satisfaction.'

'Hoot, man!' returned Donald, who had impatiently listened to the end, 'who so proper as yourself to find him?'

'And none more ready,' replied the sailor; 'if his lordship will say the word, I am gone—and, now I think of it, old Hearty,' he added, 'will it not be better I should take the cruize without saying a word about it until I come back, and bring the young lord with me? for if any mischance has befallen him, it were better his good father still thought him dead, as I find he now does, though I am much more inclined to believe he has been too well taken care of.'

"But Donald differed from his honest guest; he had suffered too much in his own journey easily to forget it, and loudly remonstrated against secret expeditions: he was for explaining all he had heard to lord Malcolm, who would want

no

no adviser how he should act in a business of so much moment; for Donald was more than half a convert to the sailor's belief, that it was the son of his good lord whom he had consigned to the care of another family, and who, it judiciously occurred to him, might not be disposed to give him up so easily, upon the simple account given by his honest friend, with whose permission he at last trudged to the bourn side, and begged a private conference.

“The agitation with which I heard the corroborating circumstances,” said his lordship, “could only be exceeded by the tortures of suspense in which the conclusion of his narrative left me respecting this dear boy: in an agony of mind I flew to the apartment in which I had left my more happy friends, to whom I briefly related the intelligence I had just gained; but the comfort of which I despaired already awaited my astonished senses.

“ With the placidity which governs all her actions, and that consistency of conduct that leaves her always prepared to sooth the more tumultuous tide of others’ feelings, Mrs. Duncannon entreated me to be composed, and she would yet throw a stronger light on an event for which, though not prepared, she had, since the relation, believed herself enabled still further to elucidate.— ‘ The clasps, you say,’ she continued, ‘ you would know.’— ‘ Assuredly,’ I answered; for they were, my Ainsley, your gift when he was named.”

“ My expecting heart,” said his friend, “ whispered from the first they were the same; and that heart leaves me no longer a power to doubt: I see him what you once was, and I am satisfied he can be only yours; but proceed, for I hang with rapture on every word that leads to the propitious event.”

“ It was not far distant,” said his lordship. “ Mrs. Duncannon, having gradually

dually prepared my mind for the full tide of joy which rushed on it, told me (oh the blissful agony of that moment !) lord Stewart was a Montague ; and from what she added of their history, as related by themselves, could leave no doubt but that my beloved children had been alike educated by the inestimable friend, who ventured to promise Henry was indeed my son. Incapable of commanding my feelings," said lord Malcolm, " I left every thing to the management of friends so adequate to the trust reposed in them. They brought him to my paternal arms ; blessed my eager ears with a confirmation of rights, which lord Stewart had ceded to me, satisfied of their legality ; and in making the fond restitution, asked only one boon in return. It needed not the entreaties of my child that I would second their wishes, by making the required promise, for already had my own heart anticipated it. Need I tell you, that it was, in depriving them of this re-

puted heir to their house and honours, the adopted child of their unbounded affection, by uniting him to Miss St. Clair, again to restore him to them? The excessive joy of Donald and Margretta, the exultation of the good sailor, not to omit that of Edward and Mary, requires no description, for you all know the strength of their affection to my family. It was some time before I could sufficiently tranquillize my new transports to see the family at Dunwarden; but the explanation has more closely cemented our friendship; for the noble disinterested conduct of lord Stewart has for ever bound me to his interest, and I have promised her ladyship to make our arrangements at Tantallan as expeditiously as possible for the reception of the whole party, for here one and all *must* meet."

"It is, then," said Mr. Ainsley, with his usual arch look directed towards Jessy, "to be a general meeting, convened,

vened, I pray your lordship, for what purpose?"

"Expressly," replied lord Malcolm, marking the blush which suffused the conscious cheek of Jessy, that the union of Henry with the lovely Jane was in contemplation, "expressly that you, my dear Ainsley, may find out among the elder females which is most amiable, and of the younger most lovely. But I have omitted to tell you," he added, "that as the present situation of Donald and Margretta left me no power of contributing to their own comforts, and as it was necessary some event should mark the present era of my additional happiness, I had the satisfaction of giving poor Mary to the faithful Edward before I left the village, and Mrs. Duncannon has promised to see my farther wishes respecting them fulfilled, as my impatience to return to Tantallan brooked no delay. The honest tar, whom at present I know not how to recompense, is to remain

with them, until, more settled ourselves, we have leisure to proportion his reward to the services he has rendered us. And now," continued his lordship, "having told you that I have already promised to restore in part this dear boy to lord Stewart, I must now compromise for a substitute, as, having felt the *ecstatic tie*, it will be requisite to my peace, essential to my happiness, that I should still retain it. Say then, my Jessy, will you not authorize me to acknowledge major Ainsley as the son who can alone supply that void which must be left by the occasional absence of our beloved Henry, for I have stipulated that he is to pass his time alternately between Dunwarden and Tantallan, and to this the sweet Jane has promised implicit obedience? She is impatient to greet the long-acknowledged favourite of Henry, and I not less so for the introduction, satisfied you are already sisters in affection."

The delighted Ainsley, thus encouraged,

raged, passionately entreated her to confirm his lordship's wishes, and by so doing, to promote his happiness, if indeed she had any interest in his fate, which depended solely on her.

Dissimulation formed no part of her ingenuous nature—to the artifice, warranted by fashion or modern customs, she was a stranger; and Hector Ainsley, long in her own bosom its avowed lord, needed only the sanction of lord Malcolm and the beloved brother, who now added his entreaties to plead his friend's cause. Turning her blushing cheek to lady Madeline, she said—"Supported by your presence, and that of my dear Henry, called upon to fulfil the wishes of my revered father, and reading the entire approbation of those wishes in the countenance of his invaluable friend, I may dare to acknowledge I have no will but theirs, and that my own heart, duly appreciating the merits of major Ainsley, has no longer a motive for conceal-

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ing that its sentiments are in unison with his own."

"Thus, then, my lovely friend," said the enraptured Hector, as he raised her hand to his lips, "let me thank you for the sweet avowal. To you, lord Malcolm," he continued, "I have no words expressive of my gratitude. Say then, have you sufficient confidence in Hector Ainsley to believe that his future conduct will best evince how sacredly he values the inestimable gift—how highly he estimates the proud prerogative of being called your son?"

"It was only my confidence in your honour," returned the generous Malcolm, "which could have influenced me to transfer this sacred pledge of my Adela's love to your protecting arms; for even the son of Ainsley, *not* possessing his father's virtues, must have been rejected by the house of Malcolm; as it is, you are by choice the second son of my affection, and will be doubly dear as the husband

band of my Jessy. Receive her then, Ainsley," he added, addressing his friend, "as the dearest bequest of Alphonso—cherish her as a daughter, and should my present felicity (which is almost too great to be *real*, I was going to say) be again shaded by——"

"Pardon my interrupting your lordship," said Mr. Ainsley, seeing his apparent agitation, "if I entreat that serious subjects may be discussed on another day, since they would ill accord with the celebration of that which presents no shade to our present happiness—indeed can admit of none; we will therefore, with your leave, devote it wholly to the congratulations with which the castle must resound in honour of your son's return; neither has your lordship as yet allowed me time to acknowledge my sense of your truly-disinterested goodness, in bestowing on my beloved Hector such an incontestible proof of your esteem for him, nor have I yet assured my
lovely

lovely daughter there needed not such a conviction of her father's friendship, to secure her that affection I have cherished for her since our first meeting."

"You see," replied lord Malcolm, "how requisite even now, as in my early years, is that more deliberate judgment of yours to regulate my actions—nay, to guide them; for lost in the selfish happiness of contemplating the joy I have imparted to my friends by the introduction of this beloved boy, I had entirely forgotten there was yet much due to his birth, and the fidelity of my vassals, who will not, I am convinced, for one moment dispute his claims when made known to them, and that, with your permission, shall be instantly done."

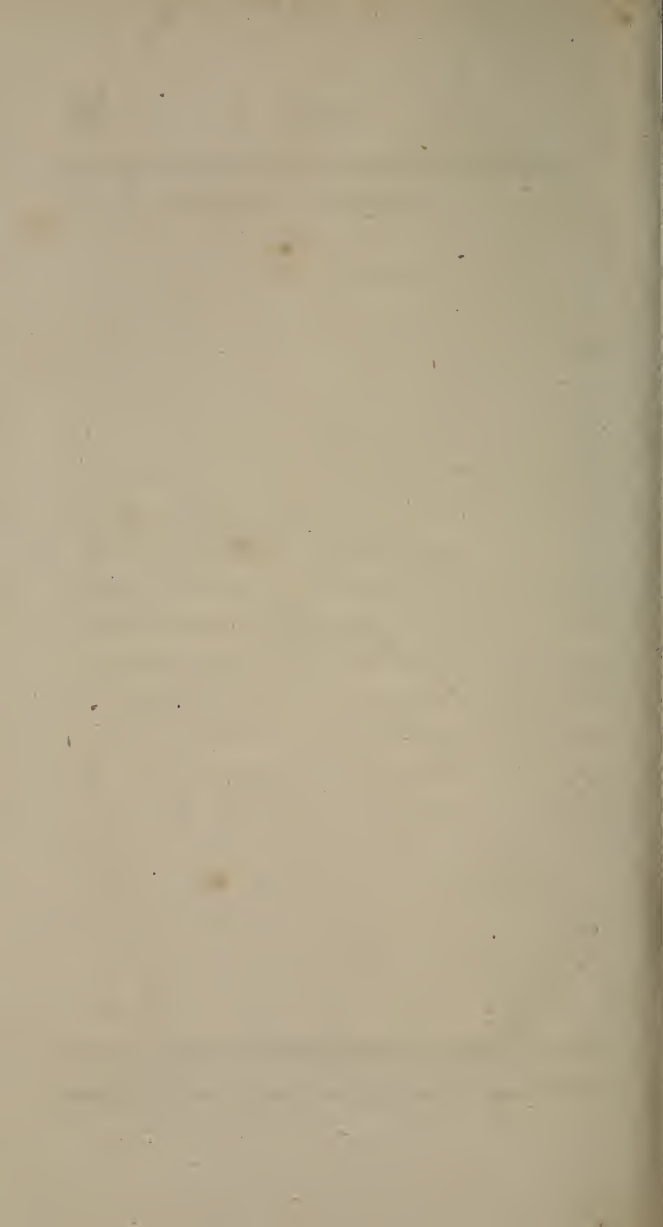
Mr. Ainsley replied—"We will send for Glendairn, explain the whole matter, and leave the rest to his indefatigable zeal for your lordship."

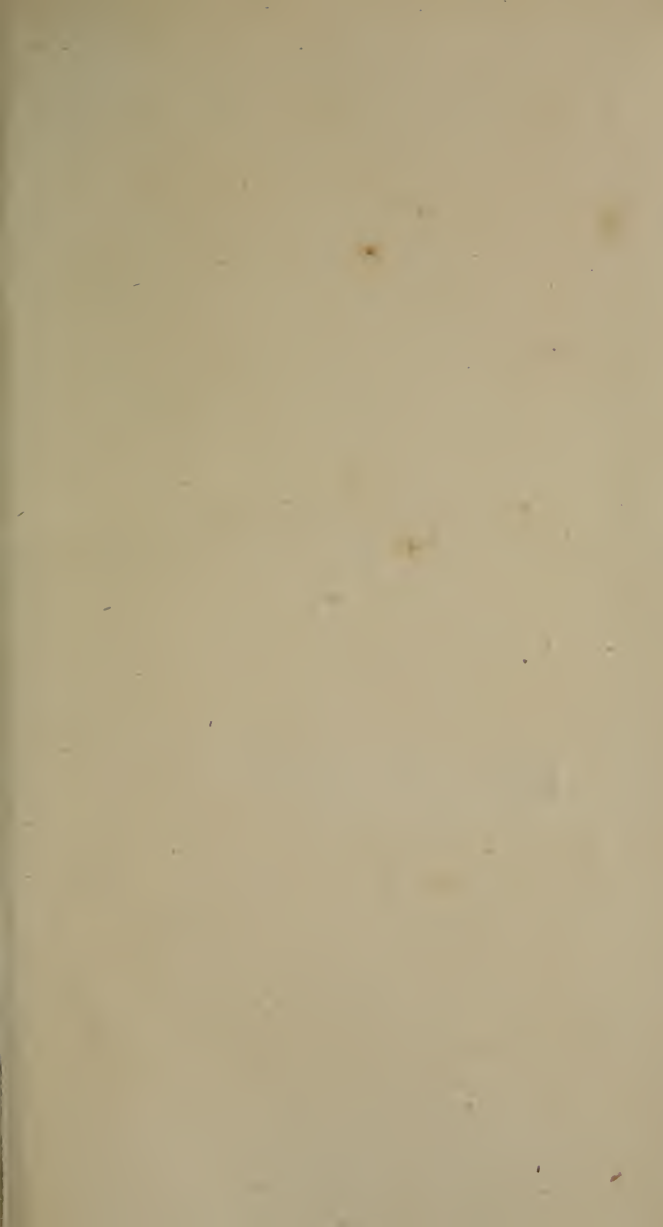
Nothing more was necessary; and
days

days of rejoicing succeeded to the happy event. The delighted peasants voluntarily renewed their assurances of fealty to the welcome heir of their revered lord; and all was felicity in and near the castle, when lord and lady Stewart, accompanied by Miss St. Clair, Moncrief, and his amiable friend, reached Tantallan. Already prepared to esteem each other, the congenial minds of Jessy and Jane finding their counterpart, became quickly attached to each other, while the union of each with Hector and Henry sealed the friendship which lasted through life; for a few weeks only were suffered to pass, when lord Malcolm reminded Moncrief, that the obstacle he had held up as insurmountable to his marriage with Mrs. Duncannon was now removed, by the mutual consent which both Henry and Hector had obtained from their fair friends to resign their liberty whenever Mrs. Duncannon and himself should name the day, which they then did; and the

the same auspicious morning witnessed the plighted faith of each party.

THE END.





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